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Ronald Selby

THE MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS OF THE
NATIONAL CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



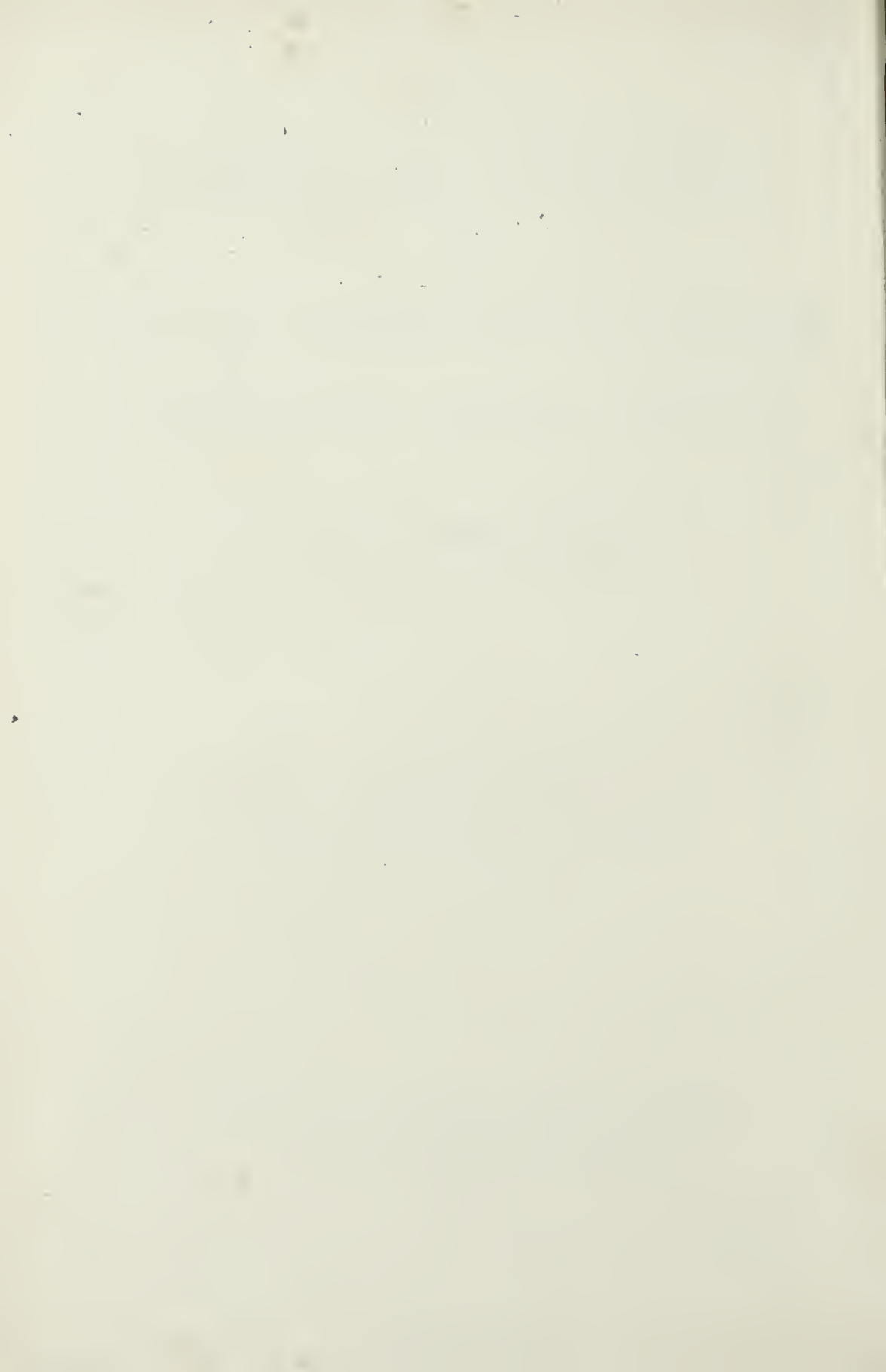
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THE DOCTRINE AND VALIDITY
OF THE
MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS OF THE
NATIONAL CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

(The Baird Lecture for 1903)

BY
THE VERY REV.
DONALD MACLEOD, D.D.
ONE OF H.M. CHAPLAINS

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MCMIII



P R E F A C E.

SOME explanation is due to those who may object that what is really a defence of Presbyterianism should apparently be limited to a vindication of the National Church of Scotland. It was with no such intention that the title of these Lectures was adopted, but because the Lecturer did not feel entitled to speak on behalf of all varieties of Presbyterianism throughout the world. At the same time, it is evident that what has been written respecting the Church of Scotland must apply equally to all those Churches which have sprung from her, and which continue to maintain her historic order and her standards.

I beg gratefully to acknowledge my indebtedness to various friends for kind help, especially to the Very Rev. Dr Leishman, the Rev. Dr Sprott, the Rev. H. J. Wotherspoon, M.A., the Rev. Principal Lindsay, D.D., and to the Right Hon. J. A. Campbell, M.P., LL.D.

DONALD MACLEOD.

GLASGOW, *May* 1903.



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THE MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

AN exposition of the doctrinal and historical position of the Church of Scotland in reference to the question of the Church, Ministry, and Sacraments, is certainly not uncalled for at the present time. The matters involved are wide and far-reaching. Implicitly they touch on controversies which are being waged beyond Scotland, and which affect, in some of their aspects, the Anglican Church more than the Scottish. The earlier Tractarian movement, and what is now popularly termed "Ritualism," mark the commencement and the zenith of opinions, claims, and customs which have divided the Anglican Church into bitter factions. We do not, however, intend to allude to such movements except in so far as they may illustrate or touch on the questions which fall to be dealt with in this special discussion.

We have directly to do with Episcopalians chiefly in reference to their exclusive claims for the divine authority and validity of the three orders of Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon, and their consequent refusal to recognise the Church of Scotland, or any Presbyterian Church, as a true branch of the Church Catholic. We are aware that the authoritative standards of the Anglican Church do not directly pronounce either for or against the validity of the ministry of our Scottish Church, and certainly the "Bidding Prayer" indicates recognition rather than denial of that validity. But, with many notable exceptions, and in spite of the trend of recent Anglican scholarship, there is little doubt that the general consensus of opinion among Episcopalians, emphatically so among High Churchmen, is strongly adverse to our claims. We could not perhaps find these extreme views expressed in briefer form than in the following sentence from Haddan's 'Apostolic Succession': "Without bishops no presbyters; without bishops and presbyters no legitimate certainty of sacraments; without sacraments no certain union with the mystical body of Christ — namely, His Church; without this no certain union with Christ; and without that union no salvation."¹ It is with this attempt to unchurch Presbyterians by denying the validity of their ministry and sacraments that we have now most concern; and if, assuming the point of view that they themselves take, we can reach solid and well-sustained beliefs respecting the

¹ Quoted by Professor M'Giffert in 'American Journal of Theology,' July 1902.

apostolic character of our Church and ministry, and the Scriptural character of its doctrine of the sacraments, we shall be in a position to estimate aright the value of the claims assumed by those who appropriate to themselves, and withhold from us, the title of "Catholic."

There are various tendencies in Scotland which also seem to call for some definite teaching.

1. There is the assertion of what, for lack of a better description, we must call the "High Church" Episcopal claims already alluded to, sometimes taking shape in a proselytism at our own doors more or less pronounced. That proselytism assumes various forms. Sometimes it is by public teaching in the pulpit or on the platform or in the press, but more frequently by private influence. We certainly do not allude to the vulgar inducement of supposed social position, which seems to attract certain of the baser sort: for the social ban which has been so frequently enforced against Nonconformists in England—which all good English Churchmen regret—cannot, happily, be employed in Scotland, where there is a historic National Church reformed directly from Romanism. What Nonconformity there may be here exists not from our declining to accept Episcopacy, but because Episcopacy has refused to conform to the earlier and national type which the Reformed Church assumed in Scotland in the sixteenth century. The continuity of the National Church through the presbyterate, as we shall show, is as unbroken as that of Episcopacy through the episcopate. There have

been periods of interruption without breach of continuity, as in England during the Commonwealth, and in Scotland during the persecutions under the Restoration. The term Nonconformity applies to Scottish Episcopacy very much in the same sense as it applies to certain branches of Presbyterianism in England which would fain displace the National Church there. The continuity of the ministry in Scotland has been through Romanism to Presbyterianism. Episcopacy was largely forced upon Scotland, and was never really national. We abhor the carrying of ecclesiastical differences into social life, and the *reductio ad absurdum* is surely reached when by crossing the Border one finds the relation of the so-called Churchman and Nonconformist at once reversed. But the recognition of social distinctions founded upon ecclesiastical differences is one which the judicious advocates of Episcopacy, who regard the question in dispute as of distinctly religious importance, disown as illegitimate and regrettable. We agree with them, and reckon these social motives as a negligible quantity in the discussion of the serious question at issue.

In speaking of proselytism we rather refer to the earnest and continual propagation of Episcopal claims that are of a character as intolerant towards Presbyterians as similar claims urged by Romanists against Anglicans. If the grounds on which either of these are urged were true, we would excuse the earnestness: it is only when they are discovered to be at least exceedingly doubtful that they appear unchristian. One hears of this

propaganda being carried on in the intercourse of daily life, sometimes by the younger and less experienced clergy, but more frequently by a certain type of laity, male and female, who drop into the ears of our people assertions picked out of the numerous books, booklets, and pamphlets issued by the sacerdotal party, which, without a hint of there being any other side to the question, unchurch every other Church which retains not the three orders of ministry. Such persistent asseveration, delivered with an assurance which admits of no doubt, becomes perplexing to simple souls insufficiently instructed,—some of whom are thereby led captive, and frequently, as in the case of most perverts, become themselves narrower and more intolerant than their proselytisers. The contemptuous assumption of exclusive divine right, and the unhesitating manner in which even the most spiritual, saintly, and devoted members of other Churches, whose lives are manifestly sealed with the seal of God, are handed over to what are termed His “uncovenanted mercies,” cannot but shock the Christian conscience of the reflective, while they fill those who have taken the trouble to study the questions at issue with astonishment at the recklessness of the statements on which such dogmatism rests.

We know that the position into which these fundamental beliefs have forced many a man of keen natural sympathy is felt as a real trial. Such persons painfully recognise the separation which these doctrines have compelled, and mourn the

gulf which they cause between them and those whom they personally esteem. They long for some method whereby they can heartily, and without loss of principle, enjoy full communion with the great and good men who at present appear to them to be without the Catholic Church. One finds the same trial experienced by good Romanists with reference to the devout of all Churches external to their own; and we are sure that while there may be a priestly arrogance displayed by some which may provoke resentment, yet the actual tone of mind which prevails among the truly religious men who have conscientiously accepted what are usually termed High Church Episcopal views is one not of pride, but of enforced, and to them painful, duty. They would, if they freely could, receive all good Christians into full fellowship.

Who that reads the life of such a truly apostolic man as the late Bishop Wordsworth of St Andrews, can fail to notice the intensity with which he longed for unity, and how gladly he would have accepted any *via media*, consistent with what he deemed the divinely instituted order of ministry, by which he could have embraced within one fold, and without sacrifice of principle on their part, the many Presbyterians around him whom he so justly appreciated and loved. We must treat with all possible respect even the prejudices of such men, while we urge the ground on which we uphold the validity of our own order and sacraments, and our claim to membership in the one Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Lord Jesus.

2. There is another tendency which renders a fuller realisation of the doctrine of the Church, Ministry, and Sacraments of practical importance.

The drift of what is popularly called "Evangelicalism" has been towards an exaggerated individualism. Far be it from us to underestimate the services rendered by the Evangelical party to the spiritual life of our country. It has under God been distinctively the chief vitalising force in the religious life of Scotland for several generations. We cannot be too grateful for the testimony it has so earnestly borne to the fundamental truths of the Gospel—the divine glory of the Incarnate Lord, His atonement, resurrection, and ascension—and for the emphasis with which the converting and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost has been set forth. But there have been various defects in Evangelicalism. If it has, in common with High Churchism, been often too indifferent to the new light which science and criticism have thrown upon many traditional beliefs, it has also shown a tendency to abide exclusively in the region of personal feeling and experience, and to minimise the importance of the external in relation to the spiritual, manifestly so in its inadequate recognition of the Church, with its ministry and sacraments, as a divine institution, and the relationships thereby created in respect to all its baptised members. The prominence given to the "saving of one's own soul," in the sense of gaining such experiences and feelings as may afford assurance of being safe when one dies, has led to a subjective and individualistic conception of religion which, in spite

of the spirituality and essential truth of many of its views, has been one-sided and faulty. Out of this individualism arises the lightness of mind with which the scandal of our ecclesiastical divisions is regarded, so that it is rather as being a waste of energy and money, or as a needless overlapping of agencies, that these divisions are regretted, and not as being of the nature of sin; nay, they are sometimes even vaunted because of the stimulus which competition gives to enterprise. Out of such loose ideas of the nature of the Church there springs another phase of exaggerated individualism or thoughtless pietistic selfishness, through which many, considering only their personal tastes, are ready to join any coterie or "Gospel Meeting" connected with any Church or no Church at all, if they can get good "for their own souls." Church and sacraments become of no account.

And there are other evils springing from the same defective views manifested in the establishment of all sorts of associations and societies for the evangelisation of the people, and professing, as a noble characteristic, that they are "undenominational," or, in other words, not connected with the Church in any form. Yet the promoters of such organisations are usually themselves respected members of some Church, and have no intention of casting any slight on the ministry and sacraments. In seeking to reach the masses, they probably at first intend to lead those they influence into the membership of Christ's Church, but practically, if not theoretically, it is very imperfectly attempted. There are many

societies of this nature for gathering in the lapsed by means of "meetings" and "addresses" which seldom lead the men and women who attend them beyond the "meetings." It is a system made up chiefly of "meetings" and "addresses," and too often ends only in more "meetings" and "addresses." We cannot but admire the zeal, self-sacrifice, and devotion of the good and loving men and women who thus labour in the cause of Christ, but none the less do we regret the defective character of the system, and its failure to realise the divinely appointed functions of the Church, with its ministry and sacraments, for the edification of Christian life.

3. There is another class to which further reflection on what the Standards of the Church of Scotland teach regarding the Church, Ministry, and Sacraments may be of use. These persons are discovered among members of our own Church who assume the position of being its most orthodox supporters, while they frequently denounce as Romanism or Ritualism the very doctrines which our Standards enforce. We do not allude to mere agitators, but to the sentiments expressed by good people who are filled with sincere anxiety lest the Church they love should be departing from its ancient doctrine and practice. It would be well if such persons would but study what the doctrine and ancient practice of the Church really are, for they often confound the habits or views which grew up, partly through the influence of the English Independents in the days of Cromwell, and partly

through that of Eighteenth Century "Moderates," with what the Church of Scotland really teaches, and what in its earlier periods it devoutly practised. Thus it is that one hears views denounced as rank heresy which are the very views expressed in our Standards. The Reformers, of whom these people profess to be followers, instead of acknowledging their support, would probably have denounced them as propagators of error. Many of our people, therefore, require to learn what the teaching of our Church really is in order that their convictions may rest on some better foundation than customs and prejudices, the growth of a later time, which are frequently urged as characteristic of our historic faith and worship.

4. Lastly, there is the spirit of Rationalism which denies, or at least fails to assert, the supernatural life and the divine powers with which the Church, as the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Ghost, has been endowed. The ethics of the Christian ideal, the beauty of the life and example of Christ, the glory of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and the grandeur of self-sacrifice, are eloquently expounded, but the supernatural facts of the incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, and His life now as head over all things to the Church, the personality and offices of the Holy Ghost, and the functions of the Church as the body of Christ, if not avowedly denied, are too frequently ignored.

For these among other reasons it seems not inappropriate to direct attention to the doctrine of

the Church, Ministry, and Sacraments, as held by the Church of Scotland.

It may be well at the outset to state the spirit in which we wish to deal with the questions at issue between ourselves and those of the Episcopal Church who challenge our claims. It would be a misrepresentation of our sentiments if we were to convey the impression that we are opposed to the Church of England or her offshoots, or that we entertain any disrespect for the episcopal office. There is no branch of the Reformed Church which is more distinguished for learning, high tone, and noble devotion to duty ; and the long line of prelates who have shed lustre on the Church in which they bore office has been a rich gift from God to the Church Universal. If the question was whether, for the practical ends of government, Episcopacy did or did not possess advantages which commended it in some respects over Presbytery, much might be said in its favour. On such grounds as securing the efficiency and dignity of the ministry many would acknowledge the special advantages which government by bishops presents. Except for the interference of civil law, it secures an "executive," which Presbyterianism greatly lacks. In like manner we heartily acknowledge the value of the Prayer Book, that magnificent heritage of holy thought and stately diction, which has been as a ministering angel to the devotional life of generation after generation of our fellow-countrymen.

We are thankful also, in dealing with the special subject in hand, to recognise the large extent in

which the Anglican Standards are identical with our own.

It is well that in setting forth these preliminary observations we should indicate the line of evidence we intend to follow. We shall make Holy Scripture the supreme rule to which every question must be referred. We are strongly convinced that when the authority of the Fathers is relegated to the secondary position it deserves, the evidence relied on by High Churchmen is largely discounted. When the question is respecting what Christ and His apostles did or did not institute, it is evident that the further we go from them, the more certain it is that we shall be found dealing with a changed condition of life, and that the views set forth are probably affected by contemporaneous circumstances, and that local, political, or social influences are likely to have acted as ocean currents, insensibly diverting the advance from the original direction. Unless Newman's doctrine of "Development" is accepted—which is not likely—the greatest caution should be exercised in receiving patristic views and traditions, lest we read back into the New Testament beliefs that were an after-growth, indicating rather how far the Church had wandered from the apostles than affording a safe guide as to what the apostles actually taught. And when we recollect the Judaic reaction which began and was denounced even in the lifetime of the apostles, we are bound to guard against the effect of similar movements.

Our principle is, that the further we go from the

apostles the authority becomes proportionately less reliable. We refuse to place ourselves unreservedly on the inclined plane which slopes down from the sure Word of God through traditions and councils till we are landed in the full-blown "development" of the papal claims, with all the novel dogmas and exclusive arrogance of Romanism. The Papacy seems to us to be the rebuke, as it is the outcome, of an exaggerated deference to traditions reaching through the medieval period, and of the tendency to bring Scripture to be judged by the Fathers rather than the Fathers to be judged by Scripture. We have much to learn from the Fathers, especially the sub-apostolic Fathers, as to what was believed in their day regarding the teaching and institutions of Christ's apostles. The documents and customs and beliefs which existed subsequent to the apostolic period do more than assist us, as the letters of Pliny do, to re-create a picture of primitive Church life; but the critical period for our purposes is chiefly within the New Testament and the literature reaching to the early years of the second century. The claim, for example, for the Episcopate as essentially distinct from and higher than the Presbyterate, can never be established if the links are wanting which connect the claim with the apostles themselves. A continuity which can be traced, say, to the end of the second century, may indicate great antiquity; but if it begins there and not with the apostles, it lacks apostolic authority. Scripture and the immediate sub-apostolic age must therefore give us the most

reliable interpretation respecting the form which apostolic institutions actually assumed under apostolic authority.¹

¹ We are fully alive to the reply which some High Churchmen may make to this principle. With them it is not Scripture which is the authority for the Church, but the Church which is the authority for Scripture. The books of the New Testament, they say, are vouched for by the Church. We are dependent on the Church for the canon, and accordingly the Church holds a co-ordinate authority with Scripture. But these positions cannot well be sustained. It is true that we discover from patristic literature evidence of dates at which the books of the New Testament were quoted as authentic, and have, accordingly, elements on which the critical judgment may work. The genuineness and integrity of the books of the New Testament rest on other grounds than the decrees of such councils as that of Carthage. The modern critic acts as the Fathers did for centuries, weighing proofs and judging from internal as well as external evidence. "It should be observed," writes Dr Stanton, "that the authority which the writings of the New Testament possessed was not based, as we in our days might be inclined to imagine, on a judgment of the Church, either formal or implied, as to their surpassing moral and spiritual power, their inspiration" (Hastings' 'Dictionary of the Bible,' iii. 539). "The pre-Eusebian age was almost as familiar as we with the higher criticism in *both* its forms, *historical* as well as *literary*" ('Hibbert Journal,' April 1903, p. 519).

LECTURE I.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

Westmin-
ster Con-
fession of
Faith.

“1. The catholick or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

“2. The visible church, which is also catholick or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

“3. Unto this catholick visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.

“4. This catholick church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

"5. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to his will.

"6. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God."

Articles
of the
Church of
England.

XIX.

"The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

"As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

XX.

"The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation."

It will be noticed that in the Confession of Faith a distinction is made which does not appear in the Thirty-nine Articles. It speaks of the "invisible"

and the "visible" Church, applying the name catholic or universal to both. The terms in which the definitions are given are doubtless affected by Calvinism, and the strong language in which the Papacy is described bears the impress of the period, but these do not touch the facts on which the distinction between "visible" and "invisible" is founded. It does not mean that there are two Churches—one visible and one invisible; for there is but one Church, although it may be viewed in two lights.¹

The distinction arises from the nature of the case. It is a fact that there is no visible Church which embraces all the saints. There is the Church that is in heaven and on earth. "Other sheep I have which are not of this flock." It is not a relevant criticism to say that because "Church" means a visible society, the name invisible Church is a contradiction in terms. If the facts demand a larger conception than the limitations which the term imposes, the name suggested, when its force is explained, is sufficiently convenient.²

Various definitions, if they may be so called, occur in the Liturgy, and are characterised by a healthy width; as when the Catholic Church is described as consisting of "all those who profess and call themselves Christians"; and in the "Bidding Prayer" ministers are enjoined to move the people, "Ye shall pray for Christ's Holy Catholic Church—

¹ See Calvin, *Inst.*, iv. 17.

² Hooker draws a similar distinction, employing the phrase Church Mystical instead of the Church Invisible (*Eccl. Politics*, iii. 2). Other authorities are referred to by Bishop Harold Brown on Article XIX.

that is, for the whole congregation of priests and people dispersed throughout the whole world, and especially for the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland.”¹

When we turn to the Scriptural idea of the Church and its divine purpose, we find that God has always had His Church, consisting of those whom He called out of the world, that through them He might fulfil His purposes of mercy to all men. The Dispensation of the Old Testament was one of promise, given, not in a book, but first to individuals and then to a nation, and that nation was marked out and separated from all others. It was a visible society into which every child of Abraham was admitted by the sacrament and seal of circumcision. This nation was the subject of a supernatural and divine education. But as a system Judaism was professedly temporary. Its various institutions were pictures of realities and not the realities themselves. As the promise was one of blessing to the whole world, it implied the ultimate doing away with all national restrictions.

¹ That by “the Church of Scotland” was meant the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, to which the title was then alone applicable, is, in spite of Dr Bright’s doubts, manifestly the case. The learned and accurate historian, Dr Grub, himself an Episcopalian, thus writes in reference to the above: “There can be no doubt that its framers meant to acknowledge the Northern Ecclesiastical Establishment as a Christian Church, and such was the opinion of Bancroft and most of the English Prelates, although they believed the Scottish system to be defective in ritual in the ordination of the Ministry and other points. With the exception of the Roman Catholic *it was the only Christian Communion then in Scotland*, and questions regarding any other state of matters than that actually before them could not have occurred to the Convocation” (‘Eccles. Hist. of Scotland,’ vol. ii. p. 282).

When Christ came He asserted that His work was not the destruction but the fulfilment of the Law, and, accordingly, as that Law was characterised by the hope of the Messiah, so the beginning of the new Covenant is marked by the first confession from human lips that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah of God. "Flesh and blood," Jesus said to St Peter, "hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter (Πέτρος), and on this rock (πέτρα) I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." The man of rock and the rock itself are distinguished, for the rock on which the Church was to rest was the truth or fact regarding the glory of Christ confessed by St Peter. Significantly our Lord uses the same word for Church as that formerly used for the congregation, the assembly, the ecclesia of Israel. The holy nation had been the "Ecclesia of God," and when He adopts this term it is as if He had said, "On this rock I will build My Israel,"—not an Israel limited to a single people, but wide as this confession of its fulfilment in Him, the Son of God now born into the race to be its Redeemer. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."¹

¹ Two remarks may be here made regarding St Peter. (1) If this promise was made to him personally, which undoubtedly it was, although not carrying even a hint of the position assigned in future ages to the popes his supposed successors, we have no right to go further than St Peter himself. There is not the slightest indication in

That group of disciples of which St Peter was the spokesman became the nucleus of a society which was to possess the earth. It is evident that

the words of our Lord that any primacy was assigned to him over the other apostles, and far less that any primacy was assigned to all who might succeed him in the bishopric of Rome, if indeed he ever was Bishop of Rome at all. (2) It is equally foolish to deny the position which St Peter did actually occupy in the history of the Church as narrated in the New Testament. He did use the keys, for it was he who at Pentecost opened the kingdom of Christ to all who repented and believed and were baptised. It was also his to open the gates of the Church to the Gentiles when he received Cornelius and baptised him. But we must not forget that the power of the keys and the "loosing and binding"—phrases which, according to Jewish usage, are equivalent to the discipline of the Church—were given also to the Church as a whole (Matt. xviii. 20).

Still further we fail to find in the New Testament any manifestation of the primacy of St Peter. If the words of Christ had been understood as giving him the chief official place among the disciples, we fail to understand the subsequent disputes among them as to who should be greatest. If ever such a primacy existed, we would expect its exhibition when such an important question as that of circumcision was to be decided by the Church, and yet it is St James and not St Peter who apparently presides at the Council in Jerusalem. St Peter assumes no authority there. He is led by the others rather than claiming superiority.

Again, had he possessed the position the Romanists ascribe to him, it would be difficult to understand what St Paul tells us in Galatians, how he "rebuked him to the face because he was to be blamed." St Peter himself claims no such honour in his epistles, where he describes himself as a presbyter among fellow-presbyters, and all the members as living stones built up a spiritual house, he being but one of these, in the temple of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone.

Nor is it at all clear that St Peter was ever Bishop of Rome. This question has recently been ably discussed by Prof. Frohschammer of the University of Munich (translated by Prof. Hastie of the University of Glasgow. T. & T. Clark, 1901). The arguments which are adduced are too long to quote, but they seem to prove that the evidence of St Peter ever having been in Rome, or that he exercised the office of bishop there, is much more than doubtful,—in fact, the evidence points rather in an opposite direction.

the purpose of Christ, we might say His great purpose, was to found a society through which the kingdom of God was to be established. For this purpose out of the many disciples called He chose twelve to be the special subjects of His training and teaching. He made them His confidants and His friends. He called them to share His own work and to go forth, as He had gone, to preach the glad tidings of the kingdom, to heal the sick, and to cast out devils. His teaching had always a reference to the great future work He was to fulfil in and by His Church. Although the apostolate during His lifetime was in the form and having the name of discipleship, yet ever and anon there is heard the permanent note of the great work with which they were to be commissioned. As His own end drew nearer His purpose through them becomes more clearly, more constantly, the subject of His teaching. "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." "He shall guide you into all the truth." "He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." He commands them to "make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He institutes through them the Holy Supper, which is to be kept till He comes again. He prays for them in words of the most solemn import, and all indicative of their coming mission. He speaks of those who are to believe "through their word." After His resurrection He expressly says, "As the

Father hath sent Me, so send I you "; and breathing on them, He says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Because all power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth, He promises that He will "be with them to the end of the world."

We therefore perceive that as God of old took the nation of Israel as His instrument, so Christ by means of a society, called by the same old name, Ecclesia, determined to carry out the fulfilment of the ancient promise of blessing for all men. Yet the blessing was to be through the gathering of all men into the Church, because, as being "the body of Christ," it is in itself the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose to gather all things together in Him. Through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost it was to become the "New Creation," "the New Man," the realisation in our humanity of humanity as it is in Christ, the actual restoration of man to God, the first-fruits of that which shall be when "God is all and in all."

We can imagine other methods by which He might have perpetuated what we would call His religion, if we dared to regard Him as only a religious teacher.

He might have left to the world a legacy of beautiful ideas enshrined in maxims which embodied the loftiest conception of God and man. This was doubtless part of His work. His revelation of the Father, His manifestation of the glory of Sonship, His setting forth of the brotherhood of man, together with the divine forgiveness and the eternal hope, and the priceless picture of the religious

character which He gives in the Sermon on the Mount—such a legacy of thought, in short, which is embraced within the Gospel—would of itself have been a rich gift to humanity. But this would be a very inadequate description of Christ's methods and His aim.

Or He might have said, "All that is required is the awakening of a new spirit in society," and have trusted to the power of the ideas He promulgated and the example of His life gradually to affect public opinion. In that case, having completed His teaching and having lived out His own perfect life, He might have gone from the world for ever, and left it to the influence of what He had said and done to produce its natural effects on life and character. Under such a method of mere influence there would have been no necessity for Church or sacraments, nor for an atonement, nor for His visible ascension, nor Pentecost, nor any of those gifts and functions of which we read in the New Testament. Christianity would have then taken its place as a system of religious ideas among other similar systems, and would have been compelled to make its way on whatever merit such intrinsic qualities might possess.

And this is the view which most Rationalists of the extremer kind would take of the work of Christ. It commends itself to that type of mind which busies itself chiefly with the "philosophy of religion" while ignoring the force of the historic facts of religion. In their magnifying of naturalism they forget the very source and ground

of the power of the Christian religion as resting on the incarnation, on the Person of the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, and on the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost.

The position in which the Church is set forth in Scripture is that of a distinct supernatural and divine creation. Its existence is inseparable from the claims of Christ as risen, ascended, and glorified. It is also inseparably connected with the existence of believing men. "It would not be the Church apart from believing men, however many sacred things or institutions might exist."¹ Theology and history are combined in illustrating and testifying to this character. Historically, it is set forth as of supernatural birth, and dogmatically, its nature is declared by Christ and His apostles. But if we would understand aright the theology, we must first understand the actual teaching of Scripture and the historic narrative. A right exegesis must be the basis of a true theology.²

¹ Dorner's 'System of Christian Doctrine,' vol. iv. p. 155.

² We, therefore, join issue with the strange criticism of Dr Moberly in dealing with Bishop Lightfoot and Dr Hort. He complains that they do not come to their study of exegesis in reference to the Church with sufficiently clear and enthusiastically held theological beliefs. He holds that there must be a background of dogmatic belief before the question of criticism can be fairly dealt with; and he gives as an instance the contrasted position of the man who comes to Scripture with the preconceived belief that all miracles are incredible, and that of the man who believes in their possibility. This is obvious, but it would be beside the point if the subject was the evidence for miracles. In that case it is plain that preconceived judgments about miracles should be excluded, because the object is to weigh proofs which may or may not be sufficient to establish the credibility of miracles. When the question in like manner is, "What does the New Testament teach

We have already seen that as it was a nation which God called to be His ecclesia in the Old Testament, so it was a society which Christ founded to be His ecclesia, partly as being itself an end, and partly as being the instrument for the spread of His kingdom on earth.

This society was very different from those which men, deeply impressed by the views of a teacher, have sometimes formed for the study of his thoughts and the working out of his principles in art, politics, or social life. So is it that we have Adam Smith, Richard Cobden, Robert Browning, John Ruskin, &c., associated with societies organised for the propagation of their views. But the Church is not a society in that sense. Such associations scarcely form even a parallel. Nor is it the outcome of the spirit of an age, such as the custom of forming clubs and confraternities, which Dr Hatch shows to have been characteristic of the Greek and Roman world during the apostolic period.

The Church is represented in Scripture as being "that eternal purpose of God," "who purposed to gather together all things in Christ." The realisation of this purpose seemed to absorb the later thoughts

as to the nature of the Church?" it is evident that exegesis must come before theology; for a true theology respecting the Church must rest on a correct exegesis as to Scriptural teaching regarding what the Church is. It will not do to say, "So much the worse for exegesis if it interferes with my theological dogma." Bishop Lightfoot and Dr Hort give the most accurate representation their great scholarship enables them to give as to what Scripture actually says, and the duty of the theologian is to mould his views accordingly. If the exegesis does not sustain the dogma, then it is so much the worse for the dogma, not for the exegesis.

of the Redeemer, so that His own death and departure were regarded but as necessary steps for the establishment of His Church as the means whereby His great design might be fulfilled. So He says, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father"—not necessarily referring to miracles, but greater because of the ingathering of all nations; not because of the greater power of the disciples, but of the power of the Holy Ghost to be sent down from the Father, resulting from the resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Him who was at the right hand of God.

Mark the historical sequence. Christ's earthly life ends in His atoning death. That death was, however, only a step in the work of complete redemption. For after the cross and the grave came the resurrection, when, rising in our humanity, Christ greets the world with the glorious "All hail" of triumphant victory. For forty days He is seen in His resurrection body, during which time He teaches His disciples regarding the things of the kingdom of God, or in other words, things bearing upon the future of His Church, and He ends with the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."¹

But He does not command them to go forth there and then on their great mission. They are to abide in Jerusalem and wait. Wait for what? For more

¹ It is in our opinion unwarrantable to read any particular subjects into the statement of how Christ taught His disciples during the forty days respecting His kingdom. What the subjects of His teaching were can be gathered only from the recorded words of the apostles themselves. All else is mere supposition.

information? No, for they were already acquainted with all the facts. They were even at that stage disciples whom He had long instructed and educated. If instruction and education were enough, they already possessed both. But these were not enough. They were to wait for "the promise," to wait for "power," to wait for the supernatural gift, in virtue of which they would be transformed from being a mere gathering of instructed disciples, into that living spiritual organism, the Church, which is the very body of Christ. The command to wait was apparently the last word of Christ. After that came the ascension, when the risen Lord passed visibly into the heavens. "The heavens received Him out of their sight." Human vision could not follow beyond the veil.

Then came the strange pause when, according to His command, all the believers assembled in Jerusalem and "waited" in prayer. There was no Church then in the full sense of the term. But at Pentecost, when there came a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind; then suddenly, visibly, with mighty signs, there fell upon all the gift of the Holy Ghost. It was the inrush of a new life, and a new spiritual power possessing one and all. They became new men and women.

This was the birth of the Church. As by a flash the risen Lord, in His love and power, lived again, through the Holy Ghost in this new body. In virtue of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the whole became vitalised into an organism. Human hearts became the dwelling-places of God. And

this result was avowedly connected with the ascended Christ. "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which ye see and hear." We are accordingly compelled from the first to recognise the supernatural life of the Church. In other words, it was not a kind of life which can be accounted for on natural grounds, or as the result of circumstances: the disciples could not have produced it by their own endeavour. Its advent is so marked by the long waiting, and by the suddenness of the gift, and the immediate spiritual change, that we must perforce regard it as *from above*.¹

¹ The word "supernatural" is a stumbling-block to many in the present day, because associated with phenomena supposed to be breaches of physical law. It is with many a synonym for superstition. But what if, instead of being any breach of law, there is implied the revelation of a higher law? All that is claimed by the use of the word is that you cannot account for the occurrence in question by causes less than a divine influence. And it is this we claim for Pentecost and for the life of the Church. Again there are those who say, "That was the age of miracles, but there is no supernatural life to be looked for in the Church of the present. The apostolic age was exceptional, and the phenomena were exceptional." But granting that the manifestation of Pentecost was exceptional, yet if miraculous, then, like all Christ's miracles, it was a "sign" or revelation of permanent realities. It was given then in so clear and marked a form that we might know it to be always true that the Holy Spirit is in the Church, and that it is only through the same ascended Lord, and the same indwelling Spirit, that as the body of Christ it is sanctified and built up. But are there, indeed, no signs of that same power manifested every day? There is not a man or woman who has been quickened into the life and love of Christ, and who, having experienced the power of divine grace, lives a new life, changed from worldliness, selfishness, lust, and passion, and become holy, pure, self-sacrificing, but will tell you that this did not come by their own doing, nor by what are termed natural causes, such

And what took place in Jerusalem at Pentecost took place wherever the *ecclesiæ* come into the light of history. Although the phenomena of the tongues of fire and the rushing of the mighty wind were not repeated, yet there was essentially a pentecostal outpouring in every *ecclesia*. Thus when St Peter preached in the house of Cornelius, "the Holy Ghost," he says, "fell on them as on us at the first." And wherever St Paul founded a church there were similar manifestations of the gift of the Spirit. So he could remind the Thessalonians, "Our gospel came not to you in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost." Everywhere it was a power of God that was evidently at work, and pentecostal charismata were the common heritage of all the *ecclesiæ* of God.

The result was the immediate emergence of a society. The conversion of the individual was at once followed by baptism, which was the rite of initiation into the membership of the *ecclesia*; and the Eucharist, ostensibly social, expressed the unity of the whole and their fellowship with Christ and with one another: "We who are many are one bread [or loaf], one body, for we all partake of the one bread." There are no instances of believers remaining isolated and standing aloof from the *ecclesia*, for the verse in Hebrews which rebukes those who forsook the assembling of themselves

as intellectual or moral effort, but by a supernatural grace, whereby they can say, "We were once blind, but now we see." The phenomena of Pentecost become the interpretation of permanent experiences in the Church.

together, implies that such conduct was a falling away from a recognised rule of Christian life, and held to be inconsistent with the Christian calling.

The Christian ecclesia after Pentecost was composed of individuals who had one by one taken Christ as their Saviour. The Church began in Jerusalem and increased as convert after convert was added,¹—"The Lord added to the Church daily those that were being saved"; and it widened out as it spread first in Palestine, and then to one spot after another, as in Antioch where the good seed had been sown by some unknown disciples; and still later it was from Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were sent forth into Asia Minor and Europe. In every place where converts were made, an ecclesia was formed and a certain local organisation established. But each local ecclesia was practically distinct and independent, for there was no formal link binding the different ecclesiæ into one great organisation. "The communities stood to each other in an outwardly loose, but inwardly firm, connection."² There was nothing approaching that which was the outgrowth of a much later age, when the Church became a single and vast corporation, bound in one by ecclesiastical officers of various grades, and, as in the case of the Latin Church, finding ultimately its centre of government in the

¹ The "Church" was for a time "simply a collective term for Christians," as Professor M'Giffert writes. "It is evidently immaterial whether Paul salutes the Church in a particular place or the saints in a particular place, and he can say, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth; unto *them* that are sanctified in Jesus Christ, called to be saints."

² Harnack's 'Hist. of Dogma,' vol. i. p. 151.

Bishop of Rome. There was at first "everywhere felt," as Dr Moberly expresses it, "the background of apostolic authority," such as what St Paul both claimed and exercised. But it was an authority which contemplated the wellbeing of each local ecclesiæ, with little avowed reference to other ecclesiæ, except through the bonds of natural sympathy. St Paul fostered a brotherly interest between the ecclesiæ, and gave room for its expression by collecting from them for the poor saints of Jerusalem; and in his epistles to Ephesus and Colosse, written suggestively from Rome, the capital of the empire, and in these alone, he emphasises the idea of the Church universal, but neither he nor the other apostles attempted to organise them all into one in a single corporate body. The unity of all arose from their oneness in Christ. "Each [local] ecclesia," writes Dr Hort, "was a body of Christ and a sanctuary of God, but there is no grouping of them into partial wholes, or one great whole. The members which make up the one ecclesia are not communities, but individual men. The one ecclesia includes all members of all partial ecclesiæ; but its relations to them all are direct, not mediate. The unity of the universal Church, as St Paul contemplated it, does not belong to this region; it is a truth of theology, not a fact of what we may call ecclesiastical politics. To recognise this is quite consistent with the fullest appreciation of aspirations after an external ecclesiastical unity which have played so great a part in the inner and outer movements of subsequent

ages. At every turn we are constrained to feel that we can learn to good effect from the apostolic age only by studying its principles and ideals, not by copying its precedents.”¹

¹ Dr Moberly, in quoting the above, says: “Dr Hort appears to be drawing distinctions which are hardly intelligible, and to be drawing them almost for the express purpose of avoiding acceptance of the unity of the Church as a really dominant idea. How can the one ecclesia be made up of all the members of the many ecclesiæ, and yet not be made up of the many ecclesiæ? If he were speaking of denominations in the modern sense, which are doctrinally discordant, and if he intended to sacrifice all idea of external unity, the distinction might be intelligible. But when the differences of ‘churches’ is local only, not of doctrine or organisation at all; and when all alike are dependent upon apostles, and the apostles are not discordant, but are the focus and symbol of the one indivisible Church, is there any meaning left in his distinction?” (‘Ministerial Priesthood,’ p. 26). Dr Moberly’s criticism is characteristic of one who avowedly comes to exegesis with preconceived beliefs. Dr Hort gives the facts of the New Testament, and the question is not how far these fit in with a certain ecclesiastical polity, but whether they are true or not. Dr Moberly’s contemptuous allusion to “modern denominations which are doctrinally discordant” is scarcely worthy, and somewhat provocative. We have as little interest in “denominations” as he has, but it might have struck him that “doctrinal discord” reigns quite as much within Churches which are loudest in their claim to unity, and which are internally as divided, and mutually ban one another as keenly—Roman, Anglican, and Greek—as any of the “denominations.” Nor, in referring to the primitive Church, can we share the difficulty Dr Moberly finds in imagining how “the one Ecclesia can be made up of all the members of the many ecclesiæ, and yet not be made up of the many ecclesiæ.” Dr Hort simply states a historical fact when he denies the existence in apostolic times of the kind of unity Dr Moberly pleads for. However one in doctrine the apostles may have been on whom the ecclesiæ were “dependent,” it is demonstrable that they did not bind all the ecclesiæ together in one corporate organisation; and was not the true “theological” unity best attained even outwardly in apostolic times, because the organised and universal unity, which seems to be the only kind of unity Dr Moberly contends for, was not forced upon the life of the Church?

This does not imply that the Church is a human institution and the result of natural development alone. It was divinely instituted by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and by the rites of baptism and of the Lord's Supper and the guidance of apostolic authority. Each ecclesia was visibly a society from the first. The Church was given to men through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and not created by any official order. But the fact of its divine institution is quite consistent with its growth into new outward forms, such as the change from the scattered ecclesiæ of apostolic times to the organised unity which comes into view many years afterwards. The life was divine, the unity was in the "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all"; but the more we emphasise that divine life and unity in the Head, and the continual presence of the indwelling Spirit in the membership, the more we may expect freedom and variety in outward details, and instead of regarding all such results as the work of man, or—as Bishop Gore expresses it—"from beneath," we prefer to recognise in them a divine guidance.¹

¹ Dr Gore, in laying down fundamental principles, puts the case in an extraordinary form, and makes an alternative, apparently his only alternative, which fills us with surprise: "The question then arises, Is the Christian ministry simply like a police force, a body which it has been found advantageous to organise? Did Christ, in instituting a society, leave it to itself to find out its need of a differentiation of functions and develop a ministry? or did He, on the other hand, when He constituted His society, constitute its ministry also in germ? Did He establish not only a body but an organised body with a differentiation of functions impressed upon it from the beginning?" (Gore's 'The Church and the Ministry,' p. 63). One or two remarks may be

But the rise of diocesan Episcopacy in its distinctive character, which did not emerge till some centuries after Christ, is itself a proof that there was growth and expansion and a change of outward form. Even the primacy of bishops, as first expounded by Ignatius, marks a new development. We ought to come to these questions, not with a

made on this strange statement. Overlooking the rather unhappy "police force" comparison, we are surprised that Bishop Gore sees no alternative than one which assumes that Christ either left an authoritative organisation differentiated from the first, perhaps in germ only—whatever that may mean—or that He left the Church "to itself to find out an organisation." Does not the notion of Christ "leaving the Church to itself" amount to a practical denial of His abiding presence in the Church by His Spirit according to His own promise, and consequently His continual guiding of His own Church? Are His presence and guidance secured only where there are certain Church officials in evidence? or may not the gradual development of officials, and possibly a variety of officials, be the result of His presence and guiding? Is not this last supposition, whether true or not, as conceivable as a differentiation of functions through a line of officers whose place and function is found at first, if found at all, only "in germ"? It is one thing to say that the establishment of a society and the appointment of apostles implied government in the Church from the first; but it is another thing to say that there was from the first the differentiation which gives divine authority to bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Besides, we have to do, not with theoretical possibilities but facts, and are forced to recognise that differentiation was the result of indwelling life, and not the result of the formal institution of a particular differentiation of functions fixed from the first, and divinely ordained to be permanent. The formative power was vital, from the union of the Church with Jesus Christ, and from the continual presence of the Holy Ghost, and largely, if not wholly, mediated by the apostles. Bishop Gore himself is so emphatic regarding the presence of the Spirit of God in the Church, which he so frequently terms a "Spirit-bearing Body," that we must believe his alternative as to the Church being "left to itself" was an inadvertence, although the phrase occurs in a passage so fundamental to his argument as to make the inadvertence worse than a blunder.

priori conclusions, but as students of history, and are therefore compelled to accept as true Dr Hort's exposition of the relationship of the ecclesiæ to one another in apostolic times.

This society, the Church, has a twofold aspect, according as we regard it—

- (1) *In itself* as having its life in and from Christ its Head, and consisting of the baptised membership bound together and mutually influencing one another; and
- (2) *As being the instrument* by which Christ works for the advancement of His kingdom in the world.¹

1. *The Church in itself.*—It is frequently spoken of as a whole, “The body is one”—“Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it”; and it is represented also as consisting of many ecclesiæ, “The ecclesiæ of God.” “All the ecclesiæ of the saints.”

The nature and privileges of the Church are set

¹ There is a difference between the Church of God and “the kingdom of God” or “kingdom of heaven,” although in at least one passage in the Gospels (Matt. xvi. 19) the names may possibly be interchangeable. Christ very seldom spoke of the Church. He uses the term only on three occasions, and on one of these apparently in reference to the existing Jewish ecclesia. His constant usage is in reference to the “kingdom of God” or “kingdom of heaven.” Generally speaking, we may say that the term “kingdom of God” is wider in significance than the Church, for it seems to mean rather what we express by the term “religion” than an ecclesiastical system. The advance of the kingdom of God is that of the reign of God over men's thoughts and lives, with the responsibilities which result therefrom, while the Church is at once the realisation of that reign, and the instrument by which its advance is secured. When so regarded we can understand why it is said, “The kingdom of God is like unto ten virgins,” &c.

forth in various images employed in the New Testament to express the closeness of the relationship between Christ and His Church, and the mutual relationship between the various members. Its unity and variety are set forth in the parable of the vine and its branches, representing organised life, its purpose being the bearing of fruit. No branch, it is said, can live separate from the vine. When a branch seeks to have a root of its own distinct from the vine it perishes, so that, conversely, life and fruit-bearing are proofs of being truly united with, and parts of, the organised life of the vine.

The Church is also called in its completeness "the temple of God," "the house of His continual habitation," and each member is said also to be "a temple of the Holy Ghost." Similarly St Peter calls each believer "a living stone," but not a stone which is to remain separate, satisfied that it is alive whatever may become of the others, but a stone which has to be built in, occupying its own place in the orderly unity of the one great temple. Edification in the New Testament sense means literally this kind of church building—the building up of the whole by the building into its proper place of each living stone, and all resting on the great historical past, "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." To be a "stone" and yet to remain aloof from the great building is a contradiction of the apostolic idea of membership.

The Church is also called the body of Christ, the body of which He is the Head, which is alive

because of its union with the Head, and through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost permeating and quickening the whole. Within that body, as is so often illustrated by St Paul, there is the greatest variety of function in the membership, each one having his own special place and gift, but all contributing, and being contributed unto, by the richness and diversity of the rest. Life resulting in organism, and in a vast differentiation of function and of characteristics, is the great truth the apostles so often love to set forth. The organism is the outcome of the inner life given by the great Head through the indwelling Spirit. It was not produced by apostle, or prophet, or any official ministry, although generally mediated through them. The source must ever be in the one Head through the one Spirit, and the wisdom of the Church ought to be shown in recognising and utilising the manifold grace of God which is ever being shown in the special gifts bestowed on believers. Nothing can in this light be more dreadful than calling that grace an "uncovenanted mercy," which is plainly seen in holy men and women, who, holding by the larger unity of the Church in Christ, may refuse to acknowledge the exclusive divine right of some particular order of ministry, be it bishop or presbyter. "Separate from Me," said Christ, "ye can do nothing"; and if these bear fruit, not only must the life of Christ be there, but it must be a life in union with the one Church, which is the one vine with many branches.

Many other images are employed to set forth different aspects of the one great truth. Sometimes

the Church as a whole is represented as the supreme object of the Saviour's love: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing by water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." It is also represented as the sphere in which the purpose of God is being realised: "The dispensation of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 9-11, R.V.)

The conception of any believer seeking "the salvation of his own soul" while remaining separate from the membership of the Church is, in the light of Scripture, as incongruous as the existence of an eye or a hand belonging to no organised body. Membership in Christ and membership in His Church are inseparable in the Word of God.

It is evident also that it is within the Church, and by the mutual ministration of every part, that the spiritual edification of each member, as well as of the whole, is accomplished. The individual grows with the growth of the rest, and "by the due working of each several part." The modern Church has greatly failed in giving scope to the working of this diverse life, and it is to be feared that, with

the concentration of duty and responsibility in the official ministry, there has been a proportionate neglect of the priesthood of every member. Little is done to recognise the gifts that so often remain only latent in those we call the "laity," and when we recollect the variety of the graces described by St Paul, and the wideness of the embrace which includes within what is sacred talents usually regarded as secular, we may measure how far we have departed from the richness of primitive Church life. For the gift of business aptitude, shown in the power of "ministering" or "administration," or the grace of generosity, besides what may be understood by "helps," "healing,"—no doubt including nursing the sick,—"hospitality," and similar services, all were stamped as "charismata," gracious talents to be used in and for the Church. The richness of these gifts—gifts of spiritual insight manifested in prophecy, gifts of interpretation, of prayer and praise, and suchlike—was so abundant as to make the meeting of the ecclesia liable to confusion from the exuberance of the life. How different is all this from the formality of Church service now! It may neither be possible nor desirable to attempt its revival, yet the existence of these gifts ought to be recognised in other ways. How many are there who might be as the "eye," or the "hand," or the "tongue," who are now left unnoticed within the inert mass termed "the laity."¹ The idea of the

¹ "The weekly assemblies" in the Reformed Churches, when the laity, under the guidance of the moderator, were free "to speak or inquire," were apparently intended to give room for the exercise of "gifts."

ministry of each in relation to the whole scarcely dawns on the modern Christian conscience. Rather is it that the "eye"—say the man who has the capacity of seeing the true, the wise, the spiritual—never thinks that he is to be used. He will come to church to be "edified" in the sense of being ministered unto, but that the body is to use him as an "eye" is far from his thoughts. All begins and ends with himself; and he is not wholly to blame, for the Church is to blame which neglects the existing graces and powers that are lying idle. It is not the work of the Church to create the charismata,—these are the gifts of God,—but it ought to be the work of the Church to recognise their presence, and to give room for their exercise for the building up of the whole. The narrowness of mind which regards with suspicion rather than appreciates the outcome of original life, except it be found in some stated ministry, or within the enclosure of the particular sect,—it may be one misnamed Catholic or otherwise distinguished,—has been to the impoverishment of the true body of Christ. "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name: and we forbade him, because he followed not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in My name, and be able quickly to speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is for us" (St Mark ix. 38, 39, R.V.)

LECTURE II.

THE CHURCH AS THE INSTRUMENT FOR ADVANCING
THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST. "NOTES" OF THE
CHURCH—UNITY, CATHOLICITY, HOLINESS.

PROCEEDING with our discussion of the nature of the Church, we pass from what the Church is in itself to the consideration of

- II. The Church as the instrument by which Christ works for the advancement of His kingdom in the world; and
- III. Those characteristics usually termed the "notes" of the Church.

II. The theological conception of the Church is based on the incarnation. When the Eternal Word took flesh He took our humanity—body, soul, and spirit—into union with His Godhead. It was in our humanity that He ascended, and it is in our humanity that He reigns. The manhood of Christ becomes thus the element in and through which we men can become "partakers of the divine nature." We reach the divine through the human, even the ascended humanity of Christ. When He was born

our Saviour, He was also born our Brother. It is accordingly through union with His manhood that the Church realises its calling and attains full redemption. The second Adam is a quickening spirit. Christ realises His glory in the Church, even as the Church realises its glory in Him. The Head and the body are accordingly one in a truer, more literal, and living sense than the idea of its being "only imagery" can convey; and the sacraments are the outward signs and seals of the fact of this union, and of the real and continual presence and working of the Lord, the great Head, within the sphere of the Church and of its membership for their increase and spiritual growth. The life of the Church is therefore in this sense supernatural, as it is the result of the energising power of the divine Head through the indwelling of the Spirit, and of the bestowal of grace, through the means of grace which He has instituted, especially the "Word, sacraments, and prayer," made effectual by the Holy Ghost.

But while the theological basis of the Church may be thus held, yet there are other meanings of the Church as His body which are practical rather than theological, and are full of instruction.

As we have seen, it was the purpose of Christ to continue His work and to give expression to what His will and character are, by means of a society of men and women inspired by His spirit, and brought into fellowship with His mind. This society of Christ-like men and women is to be the visible representation of Christ on earth, and the instrument by

which He works and advances His kingdom. It is in this sense that the term "His body" becomes appropriate, because the Church is the prolongation of the incarnation by those in whom Christ lives again, and His Spirit is thus, as it were, evermore incarnated. Through the sacrifices of love on behalf of men it is to perpetuate that one sacrifice of Himself for the world. In this way can the membership "fill up that which is behind of His sufferings," for the self-sacrifice of love must continue as long as there are any whom such love can bless. It was thus St John wrote, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." He certainly did not mean that we are to die as Christ died on the cross, but that even as Christ gave Himself to death for us all, so His love in us necessitates the sacrifice of self for the sake of others. Christianity is accordingly to gain power and to advance, not merely by books however sacred, or by systems of truth however strongly established: it must take visible shape in the Church, consisting of those who are each and all the exponents before the world of what Christ was and is through their own characters and labours and loving self-sacrifice. In this high sense His commission to His disciples to do the same works as He did, implies the living out of the love which they had seen in Him, sacrificing themselves even unto death for us all. The Church accordingly is termed His body, because, among other reasons, it is appointed to live out His life among men, and it lives that life because

it is united to Him in His ascended majesty. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," is the account which St Paul gives of his own great mission. The idea is in close harmony with the incarnation. The revelation of God in the human life of Jesus finds its counterpart and continuation in the life of the Christ-like society of which He is the head. The material as an organ of expression is usually, perhaps always, necessary for the spiritual. We know nothing of disembodied spirit. We are so constituted that spirit can reach spirit only through some physical organism or symbolism. Language is but an intricate symbolism whereby through the pulsing of the air signs are passed, called words, which, being interpreted, reveal the otherwise hidden thoughts of other minds. Of each mind it can be said that "no man hath seen it or can see it," but it can reveal itself through a variety of material symbols. So is it that the physical universe has been called "the speech of God," because it utters His glory. Accordingly it may be asserted that we cannot imagine spirit except as incarnate in some form or other. Love, holiness, desire, would remain unknown unless they find their dwelling-place in persons, and become expressed by persons who are loving, holy, and devoted. And so it was by a life lived in the world that God revealed Himself in the most constraining and direct of all methods. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "A body hast thou prepared me," expresses an

eternal principle, whereby alone spiritual revelation becomes possible.

We can accordingly receive what is meant by those who describe the Church as a continuation of the incarnation, for the Spirit of God dwells in its members, and must be expressed in their lives and character. The victories of the cross have usually been won by men and women who have shown the power the cross has over themselves. God has ever given Godlike men to be the instruments of blessing men. A mere mechanical organism performing perfunctory acts cannot fulfil the ideal. To be truly His body it must be alive with the Spirit of Jesus; and by doing His will, loving with His love, it can alone reach home to the hearts of men; even as He reached them when He went about "continually doing good," and so loved them that He "gave Himself for them." Such is the divine calling of the Church as the instrument whereby Christ's kingdom is to advance. It is therefore by the continuation of Christ's methods, as well as by sharing His spirit, that the Church will truly accomplish its mission. It is through those who have caught the fire of His love, and who by the force of that love enter into His experiences as they do His work, suffering with Him in His sufferings, that His kingdom is being advanced. Christ not only died once for the sins of the world, but His death is in a sense being continually repeated, for it is by sacrifice that humanity is always redeemed. Not only His apostles, but

all true servants of His, in proportion as they love men with a love that is Christ's love, must carry about in their body "the dying of the Lord Jesus." All the suffering for sin and under sin was not exhausted on the cross: just as all the love and the holiness were not exhausted there. Christ's sacrifice goes on in Christ's Church according as the same love inspires the Church.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper may therefore be regarded as having a double significance. If it sets forth the body broken and the blood shed once for all for the sin of the world, it is also a witness to the other sacrifice which can never cease, wherever, in true communion and fellowship with the Lord, His people come in contact with human sin and sorrow. There is a sense in which the perpetual sacrifice—not of the mass, but of Christ—goes always on in the Church; for it is only as the Church can say like Christ, "I give myself for the life of the world," and actually does lay down its own life of self for the sake of others, that it can be a true continuation of His presence among men. The atoning sacrifice was indeed complete and finished on Calvary, but the Church as His body must verily "die daily" if it shares His spirit, and is really to know the "fellowship of His sufferings." And further, it is in proportion to that expenditure of love that its victories are generally won over the hearts of men. It was a vision of such a society as this which startled the old selfish heathenism of early days, when the new brotherhood, called the Church, pre-

sented itself, filled with the "enthusiasm of humanity," knit together in mutual love, because all shared the love of Jesus, and going forth to labour and suffer and die in order to bless men with the triumphant faith and hope and love which had transformed all life for themselves. And it has been the same spirit, shown in every true missionary of the cross, from the great heroes whose names mark epochs in the advance of Christ's kingdom, down to the faithful lives of many an unknown worker now, whether in the ranks of the Churches which claim historic authority, or even among those who call themselves "the Salvation Army," extraordinary in many respects as that organisation may be, who yet endure lives often of sorest privation in order to reach the worst outcasts of our so-called Christian civilisation with the message of the divine mercy. It is verily by men and women, by human love and sacrifice, inspired by His own great love and sacrifice, that Christ has fulfilled, and ever fulfils, His mighty work of redemption. The Church is thus His body, and manifests the twofold work of building up the membership that is within it, and of acting outwardly by them on the world as the divine instrument for gathering souls into His kingdom.

III. In the Confession of Faith the "notes" or characteristics of the Church are the possession of the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God. And "particular Churches," which are members of the catholic Church, "are more or less pure, accord-

ing as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them." The Reformers laid great emphasis on the preaching of the truth as characteristic of every pure Church. "Church censures," or, in other words, the exercise of discipline, is held an integral duty of the Church through her ecclesiastical officers, and is identical with the use of the keys committed by Christ to the Church. But we will not here discuss these matters, however important, but rather take up other "notes" of the Church which are suggested by the creeds common to all.

The clause in the Nicene Creed, "I believe one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church," expresses four facts: (1) unity, (2) catholicity, (3) holiness, and (4) apostolicity. As the fourth of these will more properly be treated in connection with the ministry, we shall not deal with it now.

I. *Unity*.—The foundation on which the requirement for unity rests is found chiefly in the great prayer offered by our Lord before He suffered, as recorded by St John in chap. xvii. of his gospel. There can scarcely be a more solemn utterance than that prayer, for we are permitted to listen in it to His communion with the Father at the moment when the shadow of coming suffering and death rested upon Him, His earthly life rapidly closing, and the time of parting from His disciples at hand. The greatest hour in the history of the world had come. "Father," He says, "the hour is come." It begins with two arresting statements. Even

now, before His ascension, He assumes universal authority: "Thou hast given Him authority over all flesh." It is the equivalent of what He said after the resurrection: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth"; and of what St Paul wrote when he said, "He has been made head over all things to the Church." The other statement sets forth the end of His mission, "that whatsoever Thou hast given Me, to them I should give eternal life"; and He explains what that eternal life is as standing in the knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ whom He had sent. In other words, salvation is at once personal and spiritual, and it lies in bringing man after man into fellowship with the mind of the Father and of the Son, for all true knowledge is based on sympathy. For that end He had "manifested the name of the Father to the men God had given Him out of the world," and they had kept His word and had recognised the glory of the eternal Son. Their unity must rest therefore, in the first place, on their common life and common acceptance of the truth. They are not of the world, which knows not the Father, but their mission is to be in the world as Christ was, and to continue His work: "As Thou didst send Me into the world even so send I them" (cf. St Matt. ix. 35-40; Mark vi. 7-13; Luke x. 1-22; Acts xiii. 38, 39, 26-33). The character of the oneness of His people—not only of the apostles, but of all "who believe on Me through their word"—was to be of the same nature as the oneness of the Father and of the Son—

viz., oneness of life, of love, and of will: "I pray that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us"; and He adds that it is through this unity of life in God, causing all to be "perfected in one,"¹ the world is to "know that Thou didst send Me." And the unity is to be also founded on the truth: "The words which Thou gavest Me, I have given unto them; and they received them." "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth." Unity without the truth would not be the vital unity for which He prayed. This unity is much more than an outward unanimity, because it rests on unity "of spirit and of life." An enforced unanimity would destroy it, because destroying the freedom of spirit necessary to make it like the unity of the Son with the Father. Its nature is declared by the Lord Himself: "Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things I have spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, even as I have loved you" (John xv. 9-12). A similar conception of unity is taught in the parable of the Good Shepherd, whose flock consists of those who hear His voice and follow His steps, and to which there are to be added other sheep, probably refer-

¹ St John xvii. 23, "εἰς ἓν"—"unto one."

ring to the great Gentile world, that there might be "one flock¹ and one shepherd."

The unity of the Church is a favourite doctrine of the Apostle Paul, who repeatedly enforces it, condemning divisions or schisms and the evil spirit of jealousy and faction. From his favourite emblem of the human body which is one, but embracing a vast variety of members, he concludes "so is Christ." The unity is primarily oneness of Spirit. "For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, . . . and were all made to drink of one Spirit." And this unity in Spirit, this oneness centred in Christ, is consistent with the richest variety and differentiation of functions. St Paul's views are perhaps expressed most forcibly in Eph. iv. The unity he commends there is the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and he marks out the points which secure that unity: "There is one body, and one Spirit, . . . one hope, . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all." The unity of the one body is therefore secured by the one common uniting Spirit, the one common hope, the confession of the one Lord, the one baptism whereby they became incorporated into the one body, the one faith or the common belief in Christ, and all standing in a common relationship to "the one God and Father of

¹ The mistranslation of "flock" into "fold" has done no little damage. A fold is an enclosure, and the term has accordingly been applied to the claims of certain ecclesiastical systems to be the one "fold," but the idea of a "flock" emphasises the personal relations of each sheep to the one shepherd.

all." There is no necessity for illustrating the same truth from the writings of the other apostles. St Peter uses the image of the living temple, each stone bound to the other and growing together into a habitation of God through the Spirit while all rest on the one foundation. St John dwells on life, and on the anointing of the Holy Spirit as the security at once of holiness and unity. In contrast to unity we find schism condemned. But schism, in the Pauline epistles at least, does not bear the modern signification of separation into new Church organisations. Schism, with St Paul, refers to party spirit and divisions within the Church, such as exist more or less in every existing Church at the present moment where there are Church parties. *A fortiori*, the schism which takes the form of erecting separate communions would come under even a stronger condemnation.¹

When we consider these references to unity, we may be struck by the commanding position which the idea holds both in the gospels and the epistles. Unity was that for which Christ so earnestly prayed,

¹ It was division of opinion leading to strife that was condemned (1 Cor. i. 10, 11; xi. 17-22). In 1 Cor. xi. the word "heresies" also occurs in connection with schism, but it is in the sense of faction within the Church (so Alford, Stanley, Meyer, and the "Speaker's" and Ellicot's Bibles), and in that particular instance apparently referred to a separation between rich and poor. St John speaks of "error," which had assumed so serious a form that he applies the word "antichrist" to those who held it, and describes them as having "gone out" from the communion of the Church, apparently by their own choice, not as by Church discipline as it was exercised against the immorality of the unknown man in Corinth to whom St Paul refers in both of his epistles to that Church.

and He looks to its realisation as being the most potent witness to His glory and His truth before the world.

Unity is therefore one of the "notes" of the Church.

Has this ideal been realised? Is there such a society now on earth that embraces in one the Church of God?

We are familiar with the claim which the Roman Church urges on its own behalf as being the one Catholic Church. It points to the continuity of its existence since the days of the apostles, and with a lofty assurance pictures how closely knit is this vast corporation, which, under the supremacy of the Pope, sitting in the supposed chair of St Peter, and armed with an infallibility which St Peter never dreamt of claiming, enforces a sway of unchallenged discipline, and demands unquestioned obedience from the many millions throughout the world who belong to her communion. In contrast to this visible organism with its hoary age, it points to the multitude of warring sects which everywhere abound. "We," it says, "are one and catholic: one, bound under the divinely appointed bishop; and catholic, embracing every nation and tongue. If unity is a 'note' of the Church, we, and we alone, give visible expression to it."

This boast has won praise, even bordering on the acknowledgment of its truth, from men who have themselves stood aloof from the authority of Rome. But the claim so loudly vaunted cannot be reconciled with facts. Even if it were true, there is

more required than the enforced unity of a vast corporation, because the Church must be a witness to the truth of Christ, as well as to the unity of the body; and the astounding claim of the Bishop of Rome to infallibility as the vicar of Christ, together with many perversions of the truth taught by Christ and His apostles, would compel us *in limine* to refuse the recognition of such external unity as a fulfilment of the prayer of Jesus. But the claim to be the sole possessor of unity cannot be granted. The Eastern Church has as unbroken a record from the apostles as the Church of Rome. She has not altered her testimony, but has remained, as she always was, not schismatic, but refusing the schism which the papal claim of itself created. When we look at facts, we discover that Rome does not embrace, and in its distinctive position never has embraced, the congregation of believers throughout the world. It has set up its wall of division based distinctively on St Peter and on an erroneous interpretation of the Lord's word to him, and asserting that all within the field so walled in is the Church, and that outside of that wall there is no salvation,—it claims exclusive obedience; but in point of fact the enclosure manifestly does not contain the great membership of the body of Christ. Vast communities of Christians, carrying the seal of God's Spirit, and bringing forth the fruits of faith as richly as Rome, lie beyond her pale, and were never within her pale,—the Greek and other oriental Churches, for instance, being as much entitled to boast of historic continuity as Rome. If there has been

division, it was not of their creating. And if, coming to our own day, we weigh the facts, we behold how futile is the claim of any Church—Greek, Roman, Anglican, Presbyterian—to be the one Church of God, and exclusively to represent its unity. The Spirit of God, the true confession of Christ, the manifest life of Christ in the members, cannot be so confined. There are millions of holy men and women, holding the faith once delivered to the saints and serving Christ with apostolic devotion, who are not within that corporation which dares to say, “Out of this Church there is no salvation.” Such facts give a direct contradiction to the intolerant claims of Rome.

Is there, then, no such thing as unity in the existing Church of God? Has the prayer of the Lord not been answered? Is it impossible now to say that the body is one?

There can be no question as to the evil of division. Well may we ask with St Paul, “Is Christ divided?” The recklessness with which good men have separated from the Churches of their baptism, and have set up rival communions, usually established in memory of some bitter controversy on points of Church government or ceremony or doctrine, generally of secondary and even temporary importance, has been the scandal of Protestantism,—just as the unity of Rome, gained by the moral and intellectual suicide of those who lay down at the dictation of the Pope or the Curia the reason and conscience to which the appeal of Christ and His apostles was always directed, is

the shame of so-called Catholicism. Unity reached through the renunciation of personal conviction is a fatal result. It is the unity of a spiritual churchyard where silence reigns because the individual has ceased to think freely. Such unity is always attained when men yield wholly to a despotism.¹

And the unity is at best but outward. The cleavages of opinion and of faction within the external unity are notorious, while the incubus of infallibility cannot but rest with a tyrannous oppression on individual consciences anxious to know for themselves what is true. Men may take Rome as an escape from intellectual conflict, but they cannot help thinking, and they who have been convinced as to the truths, scientific or theological, which Rome denies, observe the unity of the Church at a fearful moral sacrifice.

We may assert with truth that unity does exist although there be unhappily no intercommunion. "The one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, the one God and Father of all," constitute a centre which does actually unite believers throughout the world. The great creeds are the common property of all. The unity of a common life secures the unity of the vine however various may be the branches. The grand note of catholicity struck by St Paul, "Grace be with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity," has a wide embrace and ex-

¹ There is no real parallel between the enforcement of Papal Infallibility on the consciences of the whole membership of the Roman Church and the exercise of discipline in cases of heresy on the ministers of the Reformed Churches.

cludes no lover of the Lord Jesus from the congregation of the faithful. The ideal unity for which Christ prayed was consistent with such diversities as separated the Jewish and the Pauline parties in the primitive Church; and in point of fact, no visible expression of unity exists in any one Church now on earth to the exclusion of all others, for it was not for unity alone, but for unity with sanctification in and through His truth, that Christ prayed. Disloyalty to the truth of the Gospel is therefore as grave a schism as the erection of a sect into a separate communion. The holding of the truth of Christ is, according to His great prayer, even more important a "note" than formal union with any ecclesiastical corporation, however ancient, which gives sanction to doctrines and customs that invade the teaching once delivered to the saints.

We may therefore believe that there is a unity which exists in spite of divisions—a unity of faith, love, hope, a common life in and through the one Lord, and sealed in and by the two sacraments He instituted.

And yet no one can rest easily content with this. The very instinct of Christian life and love compels us to long for greater visible unity and a larger comprehensiveness. But if this is to be even approximately attained, we must search out the causes which have led to the scandals of separation.

It is not difficult to state generally what may appear to have been the chief causes of the present lamentable condition of Christendom. Without mentioning moral causes, found in the pride, the

spirit of strife, the ambition, and the intolerance of men, we can with truth assert that the fundamental error has been the setting up of other terms of communion rather than what Christ and His apostles have laid down. Instead of making "the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, the one God and Father of all" the centre, and recognising all who are united in the confession of that faith and love as one in the great ecclesia or Church of the First-born, other criteria have been established, and certain dogmas or certain ecclesiastical characteristics have been constituted the basis whereby Churches have arrogated to themselves exclusive claims, and have stood in lofty isolation from all Christians who do not accept their special standard. With that group of Churches which assume the name of "catholic"—such as the Eastern, Roman, and Anglican communions—the distinguishing point of unity has, to a large extent, been the possession of the three orders of bishop, priest, and deacon in the line of succession from the apostles, with the consequent assertion that only the sacraments administered by officers so ordained are valid. Rome, assuming a still narrower position, rests her unity on the claim that her chief bishop is not only in direct line of succession from St Peter, but that he inherits the power, and much more than the power, said to be exclusively assigned to that apostle. As the papal chair becomes thus the centre of unity and obedience, the true unity of the Church as centred in Christ is destroyed, and the boasted title of "catholic" has become a synonym for what is practically the most bigoted

sectarianism. Rome has, in point of fact, been the chief occasion of schism rather than the promoter of true unity; for it has altered the centre of unity from Christ to a belief in the infallibility of the Pope, something utterly unheard of in Scripture and in the early ages of the Church. Similarly, those who make the three orders of bishop, priest, and deacon the decisive "note" of catholicity, by thus adopting a rallying-point different from that which Scripture has given, have become themselves sects and the promoters of sectarianism, because they exclude multitudes holding the one great confession which St Paul makes the one ground of unity. We will afterwards deal with the claims of divine authority for the threefold order of ministry, and the assertion that no sacrament is valid, or, at least, that the Eucharist is invalid, except administered by a bishop in the modern sense, or by a presbyter episcopally ordained. What we now assert is that in Holy Scripture there is not a hint given as to the unity of the Church being dependent on such a threefold ministry as that which is so exalted by extreme Episcopalians that all who refuse its authority are to be regarded as "without the security" of the divine covenant.¹

¹ We are painfully aware of the refuge which the instinct of charity has created, more Christ-like in its illogical benevolence than the ecclesiastical dogma professed perhaps warrants, when it supposes that the fruits of grace seen outside of the wall erected round the so-called one Catholic Church must be attributed to what has been termed "the uncovenanted mercies of God." It may be that this harsh expression has happily fallen into desuetude, but its meaning continues to be otherwise expressed, for the phrase "covenanted security" (see Gore's 'The Church and the Ministry,' p. 71 and *passim*), so frequently occurring

And what has been the source of the sectarian divisions within our Presbyterian Churches but the making some other centre than Christ the foundation of unity? In Scotland the history of sects

in the modern controversial writings of the advocates of Episcopacy, is but another way of expressing the same opinion.

(1) As regards this theory, we have to remark, first, that there is no ground in the Scriptures of the New Testament for the supposed "covenant," making ordinary or sacramental grace dependent on a threefold order of ministry. This would be to dispense grace by a priesthood similar to what prevailed in the Mosaic law and under a hierarchical legal system. We have not the slightest hint of such "uncovenanted mercies" in the gospels or epistles; and the fact that the subjects of such so-called "uncovenanted mercies" show fruits as rich in sincere faith in Christ and in lives of as great sanctity and devotion in His service as can be found resulting from the so-called "covenanted mercies," is surely enough to overturn the theory. For the distinction between "covenanted" and "uncovenanted mercies" we have to look, not to the New Testament, but to the Old. That there is a new covenant in Christ we also know. It is the covenant of grace, the "new covenant in His blood" so frequently set in contrast, because of its freedom and spirituality, to the former covenant; and its terms are made dependent on personal repentance and faith, and are addressed freely to the whole world. The conception of a covenant through a special type of ministry and a certain ritual is a Judaic and not a Christian conception, and it arises out of a totally different condition of religious life from what belongs to the Church of Christ. There can be no doubt as to the covenant with Israel. Its terms were laid down in the plainest and fullest manner. "Uncovenanted mercies" under Judaism had a distinct place, and the conditions were fully declared in the Word of God. We might say they were necessary for a time, in order that the blessing promised to Abraham should be maintained in its character of being a promise until Christ came, in Whom it was to reach fulfilment for all nations. There were also uncovenanted mercies, although not so named, but yet plainly set forth in the many dealings and utterances of prophets in respect to Gentile nations. The old covenant, from its avowed nature, was fenced in by restrictions to the chosen people. But all that came to an end in Christ. The whole meaning and spirit of the Gospel is in antithesis to the Judaic system with its confinement of grace to a certain people, and

would appear ludicrous were it not so scandalous. The sacrament instituted by Christ to be the pledge of unity has been most sinfully made the symbol of separation. "The bread which we break, is it not

to a certain ritual and priesthood; and while our Lord vindicates the function which Judaism had exercised under divine authority, He as plainly banished all such methods from the future of His Church. If He tells the Samaritan woman that she and her people had been wrong in establishing a rival altar on Gerizim, because "salvation is of the Jews," He also utters the great watchword of spiritual freedom which was to be the foundation of His future Church—"Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. . . . The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." There is, indeed, a new covenant, but it is absolutely free in its offered conditions. It is unnecessary to quote passages to illustrate this. But if He intended that something analogous to the priestly system under the law was to be continued in the Church, making the action of certain officials necessary in order to gain security for the covenant of grace operating in and through appointed sacramental channels,—we are compelled to expect that these conditions would be as clearly laid down in reference to the new covenant as they were in regard to the old. If it is part of a divine covenant that only when the sacrament of the Eucharist is celebrated by a presbyter ordained by the imposition of the hands of a bishop (and by no one else) can we have security that the grace of the sacrament is bestowed, we should certainly expect this to be clearly set forth in the Word of God. But when we turn to the New Testament we fail to discover anything of the kind. We discover government, first, in the apostolate, and then gradually taking shape in other offices, but so gradually that we have to go to the second century before we find anything approaching the development of that special episcopate on which so much emphasis is laid. We discover the manifest working of the Holy Ghost in the gifts poured forth on all sorts and conditions of men, working together for "the building up of the body"; we find order being established where there was the threatening of confusion through the exuberance of individual life; we find the charismata of the Spirit enriching the membership with diverse functions; we can mark the rise of a regular

a communion of the body of Christ?" "Seeing that we who are many are one bread, one body, for all partake of one bread," may at once be taken as a witness to that spiritual unity for which we plead as existing in spite of divisions. But this does not excuse the divisions, nor lessen the significance of that levity with which Holy Communion, given as the sign of unity, has been used as the badge of division. When one recalls the variety of titles which the motley crowd of various sects have assumed, each representing some keen battle urged in the name of truth, which has become crystallised into some new communion, we perceive the result of constituting other matters than "the one Lord" the ground of unity. And the smallest of these sects, the one perhaps which remains as a standing memorial of

and settled ministry : but what we do *not* find are the terms of a divine covenant constituting any one class of officers, appointed by means of a specified ritual, to be the only secure and permanent channels of sacramental grace. The covenant of grace is as wide as humanity, and its conditions are as free as "the mercy upon all," which is the very keynote of the all-embracing love of Jesus Christ.

The parable of the Vine and its Branches has been ever taken as a picture of the Church and its membership. The one root and stock is Christ, the source of all the life ; the branches are "in Him" ; and in proportion as they abide in Him they bring forth fruit. The terms of the covenant, if we may use the word, are, "He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit ; for apart from Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." How absurd, then, would be the principle of uncovenanted mercies applied to a branch which was *ex hypothesi* not of the true vine, and yet was as alive and bearing as much fruit as the branches which, according to the same theory, were alone of the vine ! How contradictory to the dictum of Christ would the explanation be, that such a branch owed its life and fruit to uncovenanted mercies ! Apart from Christ it could do nothing, therefore if it bears fruit it must be in Christ and in the membership of His body.

some mere episode in a bygone and almost forgotten struggle, illustrates in its persistent bigotry the same principle which has caused the sectarianism of Rome and of other communions arrogating to themselves the title of "Catholic," while handing over the millions they unchurch to what, forsooth! are sometimes termed "the uncovenanted mercies of God." If there is at this hour no organised society on earth which embraces in visible membership "all who profess and call themselves Christian," holding "the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, the one God and Father of all," and who "love the Lord Jesus in sincerity," it is because the existing ecclesiæ, with what they term their "distinctive principles," have been organised around different centres than Jesus Christ the Head, by Whom and from Whom alone the whole body can "be fitly framed and knit together."

2. *Catholic* is the second note of the Church. As given in the Creed the word "catholic" has had many significations during the history of the Church, ranging from being a description of universality till it has become narrowed to be the designation of certain Church systems. In the Confession of Faith it is used in its simplest sense as describing the Church which, unlike the Jewish, is not confined to any one nation, but embraces the faithful throughout the world—wherein "there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female," for all are one in Jesus Christ, in Whom all distinctions have passed away. Similarly the concept of universality is what determines its use when certain epistles in the New

Testament are designated "catholic" because not addressed to any particular community, but to the ecclesiæ at large. But the term "catholic" assumed other significations. At first it came to distinguish the orthodox Church as opposed to the Gnostic, Marcionite, and other heresies. During the second century, and very much occasioned by contact with heretical teaching, there gradually emerged the formation of a common faith—a *fides catholica*. It took its first shape in Rome, and was founded on the baptismal confession, and largely adumbrated what is now called the "Apostles' Creed." Some of its statements had reference to controversies raised by the heretical sects. Along with this there came the gradual sifting and marking out of the documents to be received as apostolic. The formation of the canon of Scripture was not sudden, nor for a time was there a universal acceptance of the books of the New Testament as we now have them. Among different communities there was a diversity of opinion; but the great standard was "apostolicity," and as a corollary the beliefs which were found common among the Christian communities founded by the apostles came to be regarded as expressing the original apostolic teaching. In this way "catholic" came to mean the apostolic doctrine as opposed to the various teachings of the heretics. Irenæus was the first to use the word, although not in the sense afterwards assigned to it; but he it was who vindicated the apostolic faith because of its being in substance universally held among the original communities, and its truth guaranteed by

the succession of presbyters and bishops in those churches that were founded by apostles.¹ Hence it came to be called "catholic" as being universally held by these communities.² With the development of the Church and the rise of the episcopate and the increasing concentration of power in the bishops, who, in the latter part of the second century, came to be regarded as the representatives of unity and the guardians of the truth common to all, "catholic" came to be applied to all the churches forming a part of the early confederation of independent ecclesiæ, held together by the intercommunion of their bishops and by the faith commonly held among them.³ Much later, when Rome slowly gained its ascendancy, the title of "catholic" was increasingly applied to the organisation of which she was the centre.⁴

¹ Irenæus, 'Contra Hær.,' Book III. 2. 2; 3. 2.

² "Cyprian (A.D. 258) was the first to proclaim the identity of heretics and schismatics, by making a man's Christianity depend on his belonging to the great Episcopal Church organisation" (Harnack's Hist. of Dogma, vol. ii. p. 92).

³ "'Catholic' originally means Christianity in its totality as contrasted with single congregations. Hence the concepts 'all communities' and 'the universal Church' are identical. But from the beginning there was a dogmatic element in the concept of the universal Church, in so far as the latter was conceived to have been spread over all the earth by His apostles; an idea which involved the conviction that only that could be true which was found *everywhere* in Christendom. . . . As this result actually took place, it is not inappropriate to speak of pre-catholic and catholic Christianity" (Harnack's 'Hist. of Dogma,' vol. ii. p. 18).

⁴ In this way catholic changed from the idea of universality to that of orthodoxy in the sense of the apostolicity of doctrine and of the authority of the ministry. Subsequently it was exclusively arrogated by the Roman communion, so much so that the name "catholic" at once suggests the word "Roman" to the exclusion of Oriental

And now we have in these modern times a curious revolution. The name "catholic," which originally described loyalty to what the apostles taught, is specially attached to the communion which of all others has departed perhaps the furthest from the New Testament. Holding the ancient creeds and possessing the sacraments, and a line of priesthood reaching back to the apostles, adorned also with many saintly virtues, it has yet been guilty of such manifold novelties differing from "the faith once delivered to the saints," that the term "catholic," as signifying the consensus of the primitive ecclesiæ, is worse than a misnomer.

To sum up. The word "catholic" in the first centuries meant both the universality of the Church and orthodoxy—the catholic faith being that which was common to the Churches scattered throughout the world, and therefore held to be the original apostolic teaching, as opposed to the errors of heresy. At the present time "catholic" has acquired a peculiar force in certain regions. In the Anglican Church, *e.g.*, it is assumed by those who abjure the term "Protestant," and incline, not necessarily to the primitive apostolic Church or to Scripture as supreme, but who, asserting that the English Church is the continuation and representative both of the ancient and the Western Church, delight in preserving ceremonies and customs which were the outcome of the "development" of doctrine and ceremonial associated it may

Churches, which, by the assumption of papal supremacy, had been forced to separate from Rome.

be with the Roman communion, or it may be with similar historic developments in the Greek and other Oriental Churches. It is because of this tendency, often of taste more than of intelligent conviction, that one reads in the organs of the "catholic" party complaints of there being no "catholic church" in parishes where the parish church does not happen to represent the peculiar idiosyncrasies of the "catholic" movement. In other words, the Anglican Church is not, according to these persons, "catholic," but only those clergymen and those churches which affect beliefs and habits that have their origin chiefly in medieval times. It is also used as a distinguishing title by those schismatics (in the Pauline sense of creating a party within the Church) who abjure the Protestantism which receives such clear avowal in their ecclesiastical standards. They refuse the Reformation on which, in many of its characteristic formulas and privileges, their Church rests, and take the name of "catholic" as the symbol of their sectarian attitude within this ancient Church of the Reformation.

The exclusive assumption of the name "catholic" by any one part of the Church involves practically a contradiction in terms. Thus the Romanist, when he assumes sole right to the name, destroys catholicity by denying the universality which embraces the membership of Christ in other Churches, such as the Anglican or Presbyterian. And the Anglican presents a weak counterpart to this bigotry when, being excluded by the Romanist, he shows a similar

intolerance towards the Presbyterian. The very term "catholic" ought to forbid such limitations. The duty of our Presbyterian Church is to vindicate a true catholicism; not to cut itself off from the heritage of God wherever found, or from the great stream which flows from apostolic times, spreading over many lands,—running in diverse channels, and overflowing the limitations with which the intolerance of men has tried to confine its waters,—but to welcome fulness instead of narrowness, and to recognise what may be particular and national in relation to the universal. Instead of accentuating differences, it ought with a manly breadth of intelligent charity to rejoice in being a part of what is "catholic" by looking at the things which are common to all, and by endeavouring to keep "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." The term "catholic," like the doctrine of the unity of the Church, has been so misused that it has promoted the very opposite of its real purpose and intent. No more glorious ideal can be presented than true catholicity, when men, divided and embittered by centuries of controversy, shall be brought to look at what is common to all, and, while recognising the importance of the local, shall be in loving sympathy with truth and goodness, and the life and love of Christ, wherever found.

The well-known test of catholicity, "*Quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*," may readily be accepted by all, provided that it is faithfully used, going sufficiently far back, and applied with the inclusive breadth which its words seem to promise.

The assumption of the name by any one part of the Church to the exclusion of others which hold primitive truth, observe the institutions of Christ, accept the apostolic word, and display the fruits of the indwelling Spirit, is a contradiction in terms, for exclusiveness and universality are opposed. The climax of such self-contradiction is surely reached when, within the same Church, we hear of "catholic services," "catholic teaching," "catholic churches," indicating the wicked schism which so-called "catholicism" is producing. Verily "is Christ divided"? And yet when one says "I am Catholic," or "I am Protestant," or "I am of Christ," what are these but modern forms of the very "divisions" or "schisms" which St Paul once condemned, and form essentially the contradiction of true "catholicism"?

3. In the Nicene Creed the Catholic Church is termed *holy*. This is appropriate when we recollect the ideal Church as consisting of men and women who have become "temples of the Holy Ghost" and are "saints." The character of the membership was vitally important in the apostolic Church in order to present the highest ideal of character in the midst of a world lying in wickedness. In connection with this there was discipline. The Church consisted of those who were united in character as well as in faith and love. "The essential character of Christendom," says Dr Harnack, "in its first period, was a new and holy life based on repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, and brought about by the Holy Spirit. Christ and the

Church—that is, the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church—were inseparably connected”; but by the end of the third century the idea of the Church as a communion of saints changed into what Harnack thus describes: “The idea of the one episcopally organised Church became the main one, and overshadowed the signification of the doctrine of faith as a bond of unity. The Church based on the bishops, the successors of the apostles, the vicegerents of God, became the legacy of the apostles in virtue of this her foundation.”¹ And again, speaking of the end of the third century, he says: “The Church had suppressed all utterances of individual piety in the sense of their being binding on Christians, and freed herself from every feature of exclusiveness. In order to be a Christian, a man no longer required in any sense to be a saint. What made the Christian a Christian was no longer the possession of charisms but obedience to ecclesiastical authority, share in the gifts of the Church, and the performance of penance and good works.”² Accordingly a new meaning came to be attached to the holiness of the Church. It became a “political commonwealth in which the Gospel had merely a place beside other things. In ever-

¹ Harnack's ‘Hist. of Dogma,’ vol. ii. p. 85. It is this idea of the Roman Church as the solitary empowered body through which grace is bestowed, which determines its refusal to recognise Anglicanism. Even were it granted that Anglicanism had succession, and that her orders were ritually correct in the manner of their bestowal, all would not avail her, seeing she is outside of the one divinely authorised corporation of which the Pope is head.

² Harnack's ‘Hist. of Dogma,’ vol. ii. p. 125.

increasing measure it invested all the forms which this secular commonwealth required with apostolic—that is, indirectly with divine—authority. . . . The development ended with the formation of a clerical class uniting in itself all conceivable powers as teacher, priest, and judge. It dispensed all the powers of Christianity, guaranteed its purity, and therefore in every respect held the Christian laity in tutelage.” The term holy as applied to the Church accordingly passed from the conception of a holy membership to that of the Church as a corporation which, with its hierarchy, was the instrument of salvation to those submitting themselves wholly to its guidance.

The relation of the Scottish Church to the idea of holiness followed the primitive type. Its ideal was personal sanctity, and one of the “notes” which it proclaimed as characteristic of the true Church was the exercise of the power of the keys—in other words, admission or exclusion from the fellowship of believers according to character.

LECTURE III.

THE MINISTRY AS IT APPEARS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

IT is necessary at the outset to define the position which we assume in vindicating the validity of the order of the Church of Scotland. That in which we Presbyterians join issue with the extremer advocates of Episcopacy is the claim urged by them to an exclusive divine right for the three orders of bishop, presbyter, and deacon, and the consequent necessity for episcopal ordination to secure the validity of the order of presbyter, and, what is still more important, the validity of the sacraments. According to "the catholic conception of the bishop as securing the channels of grace and truth, and representing the divine presence,"¹ the bishop is officially an essential element in a series of steps involving the spiritual life of the membership, for without the intervention of the bishop, and a bishop in direct succession from the apostles, there is no valid ordination; the ministry of ordained men is said to be by divine appointment necessary to the

¹ 'The Church and the Ministry,' by Bishop Gore, p. 61.

valid administration of the sacraments, especially Holy Communion, seeing that lay baptism is recognised.¹

These are immense claims for the office of bishop, and, if the position thus taken can be established, we need not be amazed at the uncompromising earnestness with which Episcopalians urge their exclusive title to a divine right; nay, we could even comprehend the intolerance, although not the contempt, with which they sometimes speak of all other Churches as no Churches at all, unless they possess the three orders said to be divinely instituted as the only authoritative channels of grace, or rather, as Bishop Gore expresses it, "duly presenting those outward forms on the occasion of which the Holy Spirit bestows grace." If the proper outward form is the covenanted means whereby the grace can be secured, then nothing can exceed the importance of examining the credentials for such forms.

How are we to ascertain whether Episcopacy in this sense is or is not of divine right?

There are two respects in which we may speak of divine right. There is the sense in which St Paul speaks of the civil power as being ordained of God, so that to disobey it is to disobey God. There is a divine side in all law, and a divine purpose can be traced in the evolution of society as well as in nature. St Paul never speaks more strongly regarding the authority of any class of Church officials than he does of the right of

¹ See Gore's 'Christian Ministry,' pp. 71, 115, and *passim*.

the civil governor. But it is not difficult to discriminate in respect to the latter what were the elements which he regarded as divine. He certainly never intended to attach divine right to any specific form of government as distinguished from all others. Imperialism was the type of government then in force, but his command to obey the "power" never implied a preference for imperialism, monarchy, or republicanism. The element which was divine is plainly that of law and order. The continuance of the law of obedience to the head of the State was founded on the continuance of the social life of the State, and on the continuance of law, both of them changing it may be in harmony with the necessities of the times, but ever demanding that submission which is essential to the welfare of society. The true succession in the State is not to be found in the divine right of any type of official passing on to his successors a commission to govern, but in the continuance of the life of a nation and in the abiding divine rule that law and order are fundamentally necessary, and that there must be officials duly commissioned to execute law and enforce order.

It is plain, therefore, that whether this principle is applicable or inapplicable—as we believe it to be—to the history of the Church, the divine right of government and the authority of certain officials to exercise it may be secured as effectually through the continuance of society, as God has constituted it, as it would be secured by the supposed divine right of any particular family of monarchs to govern,

wherein the succession is from father to son. This is in harmony with law in nature and in history.

On the other hand, the divine right may be of a different nature. For it is quite conceivable that God may have given a divine right to certain specified classes of officers in the Church and to their successors, to be the instruments through which He covenants to bestow His grace. It is equally conceivable that He may have conditioned the continuance of such an order by means of the rite of ordination, so that only those ordained by officials, who are themselves ordained in direct line from the apostles, can be regarded as carrying the divine commission, and with that commission affording security that the covenanted grace shall be bestowed in the sacraments they administer. The essential element here is succession. Any form of office might equally serve the purpose, but that the commission may be "valid" it is necessary to trace it back to Him who could alone give it divine and exclusive authority. Such an arrangement is not only conceivable, but finds a marked illustration in the ancient Jewish system. The offices of high priest, priest, and levite were not left to the chance development of national life or to the decision of the people, but were definitely prescribed, and the whole order and methods of appointment, and of the ritual which they were to fulfil, were laid down to the most minute detail.

The claims, therefore, which those who hold by the exclusive authority of certain Church officials

holding their commission in unbroken succession from the apostles appointed by the Lord, are undoubtedly claims which find a parallel under the ancient covenant.

But if this was intended to be the case in the Christian Church, we are entitled, as we formerly said, to expect the credentials of divine authority to be as clearly laid down respecting the offices and ritual of the new covenant as they were in regard to the old. If such solemn issues as are involved in the bestowal of such grace as is connected with the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ depend on the officiating minister having been ordained by a bishop in the modern sense, in direct succession from the apostles, and by no one else, then we might expect either that this condition should be as clearly laid down in the New Testament as are similar conditions under the Mosaic law, or that we should have sufficiently clear proof that the apostles had instituted the order of bishops as distinct from the presbyters, and empowered them alone to ordain the presbyters, who without such ordination could have no valid commission.

We are not questioning here the fact of a ministry having been appointed, but only the special claims of Episcopacy.

It is evident that the requirements we have suggested are not met by showing that Episcopacy, with the sole right to give valid ordination, emerges at an early period in the history of the Church; or that it can be discovered at least "in germ" in certain regions and in certain writings as far back

as the second century. Its antiquity is undoubted; but in order to establish exclusive divine claims, we must have something more than assertions made by Ignatius or Cyprian. Nor is it to the second century we must turn. We have primarily to go to Scripture, and to demand proof of divine authority where alone that can be gained. It is not enough that the chain goes back a long way, it must be shown stretching all the way. If each link is deemed necessary, then assuredly the first links are the most necessary of all, which are required to bind the rest to the great fact of a divine beginning—a divine appointment. Can such an origin as this for the exclusive claims of Episcopacy be made clear, or even probable?

That it cannot be made either clear or probable—nay, that the reverse is the case, and that bishop and presbyter are synonymous in the New Testament—can, we think, be proved from Scripture itself and by the acknowledgment of many of the most learned and capable advocates of Episcopacy. The question is not one affecting the *principle* of the Christian ministry, but one of historical evidence as to the primitive and apostolic order of ministry.

In speaking of the Christian ministry we have to remember the distinction between the sacerdotal conception and that of the ministry as appointed to represent the body of believers, who are all “priests unto God.” The ministry is but the executive apostolically empowered to act in a representative capacity, and to fulfil duties which cannot ordinarily be assumed by unauthorised individuals. The dis-

tion thus arising between what we now call the "laity" and the ministry is manifest; for that God has instituted a ministry in the Church with certain powers is plain from the following facts:—

1. Christ appointed His apostles, and commissioned them to carry out His purpose in the Church. When by the fall of Judas a vacancy occurred, two were nominated by the believers, and the choice of Matthias by lot indicated the recognition of his appointment by Him who was Head over the Church.

2. God "hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. xii. 28). He also "gave some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. iv. 11). There was a divine appointment of Barnabas and Saul to a special ministry (Acts xiii. 2). To St Peter was assigned by the Church the charge of preaching to the circumcision, and to St Paul the uncircumcised (Gal. ii. 7). It was the Holy Ghost who appointed the Presbyters of Ephesus "to feed the flock of God" (Acts xx. 28). Archippus is exhorted to fulfil the ministry which he "had received in the Lord" (Col. iv. 17).

3. The very names given to the ministry imply official authority. If some are called "pastors" and the people "a flock," there is an implied distinction between the two. "Teachers" suggest those that are to be taught. The command to ministers to "rule well" (1 Tim. v. 17), and the people "to obey them that have the rule over them" (Heb. xiii. 17), indicates government. The

ministers are called "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 1), while the rest are "of the household of faith" (Titus i. 2). As "ambassadors for Christ" they are representatives of His authority. There are also many injunctions of a special nature given them as distinct from the body of believers (1 Peter v. 2, 3), while the believers are to render them corresponding duties (1 Thes. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 7; Gal. vi. 6; 1 Cor. ix. 7, 19). Having "gifts" does not necessarily bring with it authority to preach, for in that case "every gifted man who does not preach becomes guilty of sin."¹

During the last forty years the question of Church order has been the subject of a research to which, in point of scientific accuracy, it was never submitted before. The discovery also of various early documents—notably the Didache—has thrown fresh light on points which had before been obscure, leading at that time to a dogmatism on both sides which was often in the inverse ratio of the actual information. The Bampton lectures of Dr Hatch, one of the most deeply read scholars in the literature of the apostolic and sub-apostolic period England ever possessed, was followed some thirteen years afterwards by the celebrated essay of Bishop Lightfoot on the Christian Ministry. These originated a fresh era of inquiry. Since then there has been a brilliant array of accomplished and trained scholars engaged in unravelling the problems which primitive Church life presents. Without naming Harnack,

¹ The New Testament authority for the ministry is admirably set forth in the Second Part of the '*Jus divinum Ministerii Evangelici.*'

Lechler, Zahn, Loofs, Schmiedel, and other representatives of modern foreign theology who have recently been investigating this subject, we have in England Bishop Lightfoot, Dr Hort, Dr Sanday, and Bishop Wordsworth of Salisbury, and in Scotland Principal Lindsay and others, ranged in at least partial agreement on one side, while Bishop Gore and Dr Moberly may perhaps be taken as recent representatives of the older beliefs.

It is not easy to divest oneself of prejudices and preconceived opinions, but in historical inquiry it is necessary to make absolute fairness supreme, and it will certainly be our endeavour so to put the state of the case, as far as we know it, without prejudice.¹

¹ No better illustration of the modification of view, which has been brought about by fuller knowledge, can be found than a comparison of the work called 'Theophilus Anglicanus,' published in 1865, by the late Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, then Canon of Westminster, with the work of his relative Dr John Wordsworth, now Bishop of Salisbury, 'The Ministry of Grace,' published in 1901. In the former, dogmatic assertions as to the divine appointment of bishops from the first, and the universality of the acceptance of the office of bishop as distinct from and superior to presbyters, give place, under the candid and more richly informed scholarship of the later work, to a truer picture of the facts which, as is shown, are really irreconcilable with the bald and naked statement made in the earlier book. Nor can there be a greater contrast than the assumption of the former—namely, that "bishops succeeded and represented the apostles" (p. 89); and again, "Their office was similar to and in place of the apostles" (p. 96)—with the words of Bishop Lightfoot, "The opinion first hazarded by Theodoret, and of many later writers, that the same offices in the Church which are first called Apostles came afterwards to be designated Bishops, is baseless." And again, "The Episcopate was formed, not out of the Apostolic order by localisation, but out of the Presbyterial by elevation."

In the Preface to the Ordinal in the Anglican Prayer Book there is a statement which, were it true, would go far to settle controversy:

We shall first consider the evidence of the New Testament as to the ministry of the apostolic period.

Pentecost was followed by an exceptional condition of Church life. There is nothing said as to any permanent ecclesiastical organisation having been instituted at first. The apostles, especially St Peter, are the chief, probably the only, representatives of authority among the brethren who constituted the ecclesia. And yet it was not a dictatorship which they exercised so much as a brotherly yet firm guidance. "They were recognised," says Dr Hort, "as holding authority founded on their former discipleship, and from having companied with the Lord during His life." There must also have been the knowledge of the special commission given to those who had been thus trained, and they exercised authority as St Paul did afterwards

"It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been three orders of ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

"Evident unto all men" sounds strangely now in view of the extensive literature and the names of the great scholars who firmly deny the fact. Many denied it even in 1549, when the Ordinal was drawn up. Still further, even if the assertion was historically true, it is remarkable that the authority is not based on any divine precept, universal and immutable, assigning exclusive sanction to the threefold ministry. Still further, "The injunction based on this preamble is a mere statutory one, originating in reverence and confirmed by English law, though not uniformly observed till after the Restoration, when the Ordinal was made more stringent in form. Up to that time the function of ordination was not attended to in the questions preliminary to consecration. And in the central words by which Episcopal commission was conferred through the imposition of hands, there was no indication of an office being conveyed, as was done in the act of ordaining a priest or deacon" (from a letter written by Dr Leishman).

(2 Cor. x. 8, xiii. 10), but yet never as "lords over God's heritage."

While the apostles stand out distinct, we read of no separate order to which authority was alone given by the apostles from the first to teach and baptise or to celebrate the Eucharist.¹

¹ There is indeed nothing decisive said as to who those were who presided at the Eucharist. St Paul is described as "breaking the bread" at Troas (Acts xx. 7-11). The breaking of the bread alluded to in Acts xxvii. 36 can scarcely be called a Eucharist, and the phrase in 1 Cor. x. 16, "The bread which we break," probably refers rather to the Church as a whole than to any officiating official. Doubtless when an apostle was present he would preside; but we have to pass to a later age before we find, as in the *Didache*, that a prophet, if present, always took the first place and offered the gifts. In the New Testament, however, the instances we have given are the only ones that refer to apostolic usage. But while, on the ground of that orderly government which lies at the foundation of every society, we would expect that in the Church—so rich from the first in various ministries—there was a recognised rule as to who should preside at the communion, yet no information whatever is discovered in the New Testament.* This is surely a remarkable fact if we are to believe that no Eucharist can be "valid" or have the security of the "divine covenant" except celebrated by a bishop or presbyter episcopally ordained. On many grounds, besides the divine ground of order instead of confusion, we defend the necessity for recognising officers in the Church charged with fulfilling acts properly belonging to the whole ecclesia, but necessarily executed by the persons duly empowered to represent the membership. At the same time we search the New Testament in vain for any "covenant," such as seems to be appealed to by those who claim as the only channels of "covenanted grace" the ordinances celebrated by presbyters ordained by bishops, and who regard the Eucharists celebrated by presbyters not episcopally ordained as "without the security" of the supposed divine covenant. That this belief gradually grew in the

* It is remarkable that, with the exception of what is suggested in the Synoptic Gospels, we have no clear description of the manner in which the Eucharist was celebrated till the second century. The *Didache* is perhaps the first, but it has peculiarities; but Justin Martyr affords the earliest living picture of the rite. (Cf. Principal Lindsay's 'The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries,' p. 50.)

There was an absolute liberty of "prophesying," and any one who had a word of "exhortation" or "interpretation," or "a tongue," was at liberty to manifest it in the meeting of the ecclesia, provided he did so in an orderly manner (1 Cor. xiv. 26). Baptism was administered by evangelists as well as apostles; and Ananias, who baptised St Paul, and who also appointed him by the imposition of hands, is described simply as a disciple. Nothing is said as to any order of persons specially empowered to celebrate the Eucharist, and if we give full force to the suggestive statement (Acts ii. 46), "And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart," we may believe that this picture of what was done at the very commencement of the Church signifies that, following the analogy of the Passover, "the breaking of the bread"—if the phrase here refers to the Eucharist, as it does elsewhere—was celebrated by the head of the house.¹ It would, how-

second century, and increased until it became extensively prevalent in the third century, may be freely granted as an outcome of subsequent Church life, but there is no evidence for the claim to divine authority "from the first" for such views.

¹ Bishop Gore gives a different interpretation of the previous phrase (Acts ii. 42), "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." He suggests that all these clauses are governed by the words *τῶν ἀποστόλων*, so characterising all the clauses, that it was not only the teaching of the apostles, but the fellowship and the breaking of bread and the prayers of the apostles ('Church and Ministry,' p. 256 n.) But this is surely somewhat forced. The "fellowship" (*κοινωνία*) was the fellowship of the ecclesia, and so must the breaking of bread and the prayers, and we cannot well limit such only to the occasions when the apostles

ever, be wrong to found any precedent on what occurred at that moment in the history of the Church and almost in the midst of the phenomena of Pentecost.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost and His continued indwelling in each believer was the formative power out of which the Church took shape and unity.

Besides their special commission to be witnesses for Christ and His resurrection, the apostles were themselves endowed with certain charismata (spiritual gifts), just as each believer had his special gift. The great Head, who, through the Holy Ghost, had given some to be apostles, gave others to be prophets and teachers, bestowing upon others the power of working miracles, healing, helping, government, diversities of tongue, &c., and the duty of the apostles, as being the guides of the Church, was to recognise these gifts and give room for their exercise. The ecclesia was not the result of an external organisation imposed by the apostles *ab extra*: it was the product of the indwelling life; and that life created, as all life does, the organism appropriate for its development; it was the life of the Holy Spirit indwelling in the Church—guided and governed by this power—and largely mediated by the apostles. The prophets, who, speaking in the Spirit, were the recognised revealers of the divine will, came next to the apostles, and the

were officially present. This is surely not taught here, for how could the *κοινωνία* have been dependent on the presence of the apostles? Dr Hort, on the other hand, sees in the words only the suggestion of “common prayer being intended, a bond of fellowship,” &c.

Church is accordingly said to be "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets." St Peter at Pentecost was the divine instrument whereby the Church took shape as a society, gathering into itself those who were converted by the preached word, and were baptised, while the divinely inspired utterances of the apostles and prophets enlightened the members in the knowledge of God's will. The offices we have mentioned were not permanent. They represented functions, the result of charismatic gifts, rather than permanent offices. The charismatic ministry belonged to the Church at large, and was not fixed to any locality. The prophets as such did not necessarily hold any localised office, although those who did hold such might be prophets. There was probably at the very first no settled local ministry in the ecclesia. The Church was furnished with divinely gifted men who contributed to the wellbeing of the whole, and were effectual "for a work of the ministry; for the building up of the body of Christ." It was a period in marked contrast to the Church now, with its stereotyped system of ministerial education and government. The charismatic ministries of the early Church carried the credentials of the Spirit of God.

The first movement towards the establishment of a permanent order in the Church was the appointment of deacons in the ecclesia of Jerusalem.¹ It

¹ There is a division of opinion as to whether "the seven" so elected in Jerusalem represent the office of deacon as it afterwards existed in the Church. They are not called deacons at first. Philip is simply

arose from a felt necessity, and was instituted by the apostles to gain requisite relief from the exacting duty of distributing the alms of the Church. "The serving (*διακονεῖν*) of tables" took them away from their proper ministry (the *διακονία τοῦ λόγου*).

The complaints of the Hellenist Jews were but the occasion of the change, for when we recollect the almost communistic generosity of the Church, the task of distribution, which apparently fell on the apostles at whose feet the believers laid their gifts, must have been peculiarly onerous. But what may strike us is the natural development of Church order which is here illustrated. The apostles, when appointing deacons, were plainly meeting an emergency rather than acting from any preconceived theory of Church government or of a special ecclesiastical order appointed for the Church in all ages. They apparently were guided by circumstances rather than working towards an end previously fixed by divine authority. The Church was certainly being organised, for its life was not to be amorphous and undefined, yet the manner in which the organisation came about is suggestive. The apostles called on the ecclesia to choose fit men for a duty the necessity for which was felt, and the right men being chosen, the apostles laid their hands upon them, which was the common and ancient form of appointment to any office.

This took place in Jerusalem, but the Church was termed "one of the seven" (Acts xxi. 8). Principal Lindsay seems to hold that "the seven" were the presbyters of Acts xi. (see 'The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries'). It appears more natural to suppose that the service of the seven became the office of the permanent deacons.

rapidly spreading over Judea and beyond it. Thus we find *ecclesiæ* being formed, not by apostles but by fugitive believers, throughout Judea, Samaria, and as far as Damascus; and gradually Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch were visited, and *ecclesiæ* established in these places, consisting apparently of Jews only, because the admission of Gentiles had not yet been recognised.

It was on the occasion of the arrival of St Paul and St Barnabas at Jerusalem, with the contribution sent by the believers in Antioch for the saints suffering from famine, that we first hear of what was to become a new order of ministry in the Church. The alms were appointed to be given to the elders or presbyters of the Jerusalem *ecclesia* for distribution (Acts xi. 30).

Nothing is told as to when these presbyters were first appointed.¹ Eldership had always been a familiar institution in the Jewish Church. At the date in question they exercised distinct functions as members of the Synedrion, the court of discipline connected with every synagogue. It is possible that the apostles, as Dr Lightfoot believes,² adopted the existing organisation of the Jewish *ecclesia*, which was, as regards elders, associated with a divine sanction; or they might have made a fresh and original appointment of the presbyterate as a new order in the Church. We have nothing to guide us to a clear conclusion, but if they assumed the

¹ It may seem an extreme position to assert that the apostles had been made presbyters by Christ Himself, because St Peter and St John, *e.g.*, describe themselves as presbyters.

² 'Christian Ministry,' p. 17.

existing organisation the duties of the disciplinary elders of the Synedrion must have undergone a change. In any case, the appointment was an apostolic and consequently divine institution. St Paul and St Barnabas, before the completion of their first missionary journey (A.D. 48-50), appointed elders or presbyters in the churches they had founded in Asia Minor (Acts xiv. 23). There is nothing said of these elders having been ordained, for the word *χειροτόνειν* (voting by holding up the hand) simply means election. The analogy, however, of other similar appointments suggests the laying on of hands, although it is not mentioned.

The position of the presbyterate comes into full view at what is called the Council of Jerusalem (A.D. 51), when the question of admitting the Gentiles without compelling circumcision was decided. It has usually been said that St James occupied the position of chairman, and presided at the Council at which St Peter and the other apostles were present; but, as Dr Hort shows, this is not said in the Acts, and the word translated "judgment" which occurs in his speech means no more than "opinion." The Council properly so called consisted only of the apostles and presbyters, while the whole ecclesia is represented as approving; yet the people are distinguished from those who constituted the deliberative Council, and the decree is issued in the name of the apostles and elder brethren,¹—*i.e.*, the presbyters, only.

¹ The reading, "The apostles and elders and brethren," is now acknowledged to be incorrect.

That the presbyters are recognised as holding an official position in the Church is therefore plain. The name of bishop, ἐπισκόπος, does not as yet occur. This is not wholly to be accounted for because it is Greek, for it occurs in the LXX., with which the Jews were quite familiar. The only two orders having a permanent place in the history of the Church that are mentioned at this date (A.D. 51) are deacons and presbyters, for the apostolic office was admittedly temporary.¹

The advocates of Episcopacy usually term St James the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and see in the position he occupied, "if not the name, at least the substance, of the episcopate." But there is not sufficient ground for this claim. That he may have presided at the meeting of the Council, and perhaps occupied the presidency of the College of Presbyters, may be admitted as probable, but this is very far from the assumption that in him a new order of ministry was instituted. If his position involved the emergence of a new governing

¹ Dr Gore holds that our Lord intended the apostolate to be permanent "to the end of the world" ('Church and Ministry,' p. 228, and elsewhere). This forms a basis for the further claim that the bishops succeeded to the apostolate. Bishop Lightfoot characterises this theory as "baseless" ('Christian Ministry,' p. 23). "The theory," writes Harnack, "that the bishops were successors of the apostles—that is, possessed the apostolic office—must be considered a Western one which was very slowly and gradually adopted in the East. Even in the original of the first six books of the apostolic constitutions, composed about the end of the third century, which represents the bishop as mediator, king, and teacher of the community, the Episcopal office is not yet regarded as the apostolic one. It is rather presbyters, as in Ignatius, who are classed with the apostles" ('Hist. Dogma,' vol. ii. p. 71, note).

order in the Church to which were allotted the powers associated with the modern episcopate, we should expect the notice of such an appointment accompanied by the laying on of hands, now deemed so necessary for a valid ministry. St James, the brother of our Lord, was not even one of the twelve, and in all likelihood gained his position in Jerusalem because of his connection with Christ through the flesh,—a reason in complete harmony with oriental habits, as well perhaps as in consequence of his personal character and acceptability to the Jews. St Paul alone calls him an apostle, and in his case it was appropriate, because, in spite of his having at one time not believed in the glory of Jesus, he was one of those to whom He had revealed Himself after His resurrection, which was the necessary qualification of an apostle in the strict sense.¹ But his connection with the presbyters would rather indicate that he himself was a presbyter. At the most, his position was much more like that of a permanent “moderator” in the modern Presbyterian Church than that of a bishop. We are far from denying that in after-years, when the episcopate was coming into view, St James’s position might have formed a sort of precedent for the episcopate, as the existence of a permanent “moderator” might be held as affording a similar ground, as was at one time the case

¹ Principal Lindsay makes the suggestive observation that he had not fulfilled the missionary work which belonged to the apostles, and which the very name of his office implied (‘The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries,’ p. 81).

in Scotland. But the position of St James is so peculiar that only a special pleader for some pre-conceived theory would dream of finding proof bearing on modern controversies from what is related in the Acts. On the whole, Bishop Lightfoot, with his usual scholarly fairness, admirably sums up the evidence as far as it goes. He sees in St James the episcopal office only in a rudimentary form, and at the same time says: "If in some passages St James is named by himself, in others he is omitted and the presbyters alone are mentioned. From this it may be inferred that, though holding a position superior to the rest, he was still considered a member of the presbytery; that he was, in fact, the head or president of the college." Dr Hort, on the other hand, denies, as we have seen, any evidence in the Acts "which bears out what is often said, that St James presided over the conference." "His own circumstances were unique, and the circumstances of the ecclesia of Jerusalem were unique. Peculiar functions founded on peculiar qualifications is what the narrative suggests."¹

When we pass from this early scene in the life of the Church we discover a gradual coming into light of certain offices, not without various cross-lines, in which temporary functions are at work. It is universally admitted that the charismatic ministry of the prophets and the evangelists and of apostles, both in the primary and in the secondary sense of being envoys or missionary preachers, must

¹ Hort's 'Ecclesia,' p. 79.

be regarded as temporary and distinct from the regular local ministry.¹

We are not concerned with the special functions exercised by Timothy at Ephesus, or Titus in Crete, acting as delegates commissioned by St Paul. They were not bishops as we understand the term. "It is the conception of a later age," writes Bishop Lightfoot, "which represents Timothy as Bishop of Ephesus, or Titus as Bishop of Crete. St Paul's own language implies that the position which they hold was temporary."²

Confining ourselves at present to the New Testament, we find, beside that of deacon, two titles, presbyter (or elder) and bishop (or overseer),³

¹ "But while following the gradual emergence of the future constitution of the Church, we must recollect that from the first there were in all probability ministers who taught and guided the ecclesia, and apparently presided at the public services and at the Eucharist. The good order of the ecclesia required that not every one should direct the worship or offer the gifts, but only those who were entitled to do so because of manifest charismata, or by appointment—whether that of the apostles or of the existing ministry, or of the ecclesiæ, cannot well be determined." (As to the latter, see Hort's 'Ecclesia,' pp. 64, 99, 100.)

² Lightfoot, p. 28. Bishop Gore puts it otherwise: "Timothy and Titus exercise what is essentially the later episcopal office, but it would not appear that this authority, though essentially *permanent*, is definitely localised like that of the diocesan bishop" ('Church and Ministry,' p. 247). Certainly it would not, seeing that some centuries must pass before the true diocesan bishop came into existence; and we might ask his authority for asserting and emphasising by italics the word "*permanent*." Bishop Lightfoot's statement as to the temporary character of their duties is more consonant with facts.

³ It is to be regretted that neither in the Authorised nor the Revised Version of the New Testament any distinction is made between the technical use of the word *presbuteros*, describing (a) the church official or Christian minister, (b) the original meaning of *presbuteros* as one who is old in years, and (c) the elder of the Jewish Synedrion. While the

applied to the permanent local Church officers, and modern authorities are at variance as to the exact relationship in which they mutually stand.¹

word "bishop" is employed with all its modern associations to represent the *episcopos*, and is never translated "overseer," the equivalent ecclesiastical term "presbyter" is persistently avoided. This, as we humbly think, has led to some confusion. There are four meanings in which presbyter occurs in Scripture: (1) The older men as opposed to the younger (Acts xi. 17; Titus ii. 5; 1 Peter v. 5). (2) Officially to the elders of the Jews, in the Gospels throughout. (3) To the office of presbyter in the Christian Church (Acts xi. 30; xiv. 13; xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 26; xvi. 4; xx. 17; xxi. 18; 1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19; Titus i. 5; James v. 14; 1 Peter v. 1, and perhaps v. 5; 2 John i. 1). (4) To the twenty-four elders spoken of in Revelations as part of the heavenly host.

We have here to do only with the third class—viz., the presbyters of the Christian Church along with bishops and deacons. We can therefore see no reason why the revisers should not have distinguished the official title of presbyter from elder as they do bishop from overseer. We may also go further and express our regret that in the Prayer Book the word "priest" (which has led to so many trying consequences) should have been substituted for presbyter, from which the word "priest" is derived, and of which it was intended as an equivalent (Hooker's 'Eccles. Polity,' v. lxxviii. 3).

¹ The origin of each of these titles has been critically examined by Dr Hatch, who holds that they were transferred from existing offices which had well-known functions in Jewish and Greek communities, and that they carried with them similar functions when they became ecclesiastical titles. The presbyter, as he has shown, belonged to the Jewish Synedrion, the court connected with every synagogue, whether in Palestine or among the Jews of the Dispersion. The duty of that court was to exercise discipline, and when presbyters were appointed in the Christian ecclesiæ they formed, according to Dr Hatch, a body charged with keeping the life of the membership pure—an all-important function, for at that time Christianity was in the midst of surrounding heathendom. *Ἐπίσκοπος*, or *ἐπιμελητής*, was the title of the officer appointed in Greek communities to take charge of the funds belonging to the confraternities, usually intended for charitable purposes. Dr Hatch would similarly differentiate these two classes of

The belief on which we Presbyterians rest our claims to the possession of apostolic order and authority is that in the New Testament presbyter and bishop are identical and synonymous, and that this holds good in the Western Churches well on into the second century, and still later in the Church of Alexandria. We shall deal with the New Testament evidence first.

1. We hold that the episcopate in the modern sense, and as Bishop Lightfoot seems to prove, was evolved out of the presbyterate by "elevation"; that essentially, as the Roman Church itself teaches,¹ it was not a separate order but a dignity, even as an archbishop is not a new order but a dignity invested with certain privileges and powers. We hold that, according to Scripture and the early

officers when appointed in the ecclesiæ. But he seems to overlook descriptions in the New Testament which attribute to both offices duties which Dr Hatch would confine to each separately. Thus it was to the presbyters that the funds raised for the poor in Jerusalem were given, and at the conference in Jerusalem it was to the presbyters *quâ* presbyters, with the apostles, that the serious doctrinal question of the admission of Gentiles was referred. This was not a matter of discipline but of doctrinal importance. Then, again, we find the *episcopoi* are to be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. iii. 3). These differences would be harmonised if presbyter and bishop were recognised as being at first synonymous terms referring to the same office, but as Dr Hatch's theory makes them different in origin and in their duties, it seems as if his suggestive reference to contemporaneous customs had been pushed too far and lacked Scriptural support. See also the still more suggestive passage in 1 Peter v. 1, 2.

¹ Morinus, who is an undoubted authority as to Roman history and texts, says that the saying of Hilary the deacon, "*Episcopi et presbyteri una ordinatio est*"—(the ordination or "order" of bishop and presbyter are the same)—"is the general opinion of the Latin Fathers."

Fathers, presbyter and bishop being synonyms for the same office, the essential qualities of the original office remained in the presbyterate as much as in the episcopate, and that of these the presbyterate could not have been deprived because of the elevation at a later date of bishops out of originally the same rank of ministry. If, as the advocates of Episcopacy so frequently assert, the special authority of bishops was "from above," then assuredly, in the primitive Church, that authority was given as much to the presbyterate as to the episcopate. Still further, we have no evidence of any subsequent and formal deprivation "from above" of the authority which the presbyterate undoubtedly held as being one with the episcopate in apostolic times.¹ Accordingly we maintain that "succession" in the presbyterate is as validly secured through a line of presbyters as through the episcopate, and, if lineal succession from the apostles is necessary now to secure validity for the Sacraments, then that succession, as we shall subsequently show, is clearly found in the presbyterate of the Church of Scotland.

The first fact on which our claims rest, as far as the New Testament is concerned, is the identity of the two offices of presbyter and bishop in Scriptural usage. That they are therein interchangeable appears the only way of accounting for the manner in which they are employed. The proofs of this are so familiar that it may seem superfluous to re-

¹ We will deal later on with the traditions and legends respecting the institution of bishops by St John.

state them. Bishop Lightfoot in his exhaustive essay has proved this identification in Scripture up to the hilt. For completeness of treatment it is necessary, however, to set forth the evidence. Taking instances in chronological sequence, we find—

1. In the Church of Jerusalem (*circa* A.D. 51) only presbyters and deacons are mentioned along with apostles. If the name of presbyter and *episcopos* do not represent the same office, then we must conclude that the *episcopos* had no place in the earliest Church organisation, unless St James was a bishop, which we have already seen is more than improbable. The identification of the two names here is as necessary to show the primitive position of the *episcopos* as of the presbyter.

2. About the year A.D. 57 St Paul summoned the presbyters of Ephesus to Miletus, and delivered the touching address in which he exhorts them in these words, "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood." Here the identification of the presbyterate and episcopate is undoubted, for the names are used as synonymous.

3. Similarly the absence of the name presbyter in the Epistle to the Philippians (*circa* A.D. 62), and the mention only of bishops and deacons, would be inconceivable unless bishop and presbyter were the same, because presbyters undoubtedly formed then, and ever since, a prominent and principal element in the organisation of the Church. To reduce the ministry to two orders, bishops and

deacons, would be as much against the claims of the episcopate in the modern sense as of the presbyterate. If by bishop St Paul meant what St Cyprian meant, or what Episcopalians now mean, then we have a Church organisation consisting of but two orders without the order of the presbyterate or "priesthood," which has formed the very backbone of the ministry in all ages. We are therefore compelled, even for the sake of safeguarding Episcopacy, to regard the presbyters as included under the title of "bishops" in the letter to the Philippians.

4. In 1 Peter v. 1, 2 (*circa* A.D. 64), we have exhortations to the presbyters in which he desires them to "tend the flock of God, exercising the oversight." In the original the word is ἐπισκοποῦντες—that is "acting as bishops" or "overseers" over them. The doubt as to the reading scarcely affects the sense, as Bishop Gore acknowledges, from the reference to "the Chief Shepherd."

5. In 1 Timothy (which is a letter addressed to Timothy at Ephesus), where the presbyters were the same presbyters as he had exhorted at Miletus, there is at first in the epistle no mention of presbyters at all, but apparently a description of the qualifications necessary for bishops and deacons, and yet from 1 Tim. v. 17, 20, it seems that the presbyterate was in St Paul's mind. We cannot evade the conclusion that the presbyters whom he exhorted at Miletus as bishops who were to shepherd the flock of God, were the same whom he calls in the epistle bishops and presbyters alike.

6. In the Epistle to Titus we find this identification still more clearly stated. Titus was acting as delegate for St Paul in Crete, where apparently the Church organisation was as yet in a rudimentary form, as there is no mention whatever of deacons. He had left Titus to "set in order the things that are wanting," and especially "to appoint presbyters in every city"—"men blameless, husbands of one wife, having children that are believers, who are not accused of riot, or unruly"; and he then says, "For the bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed," &c. Nothing can be more explicit than this identification of the two titles. That the mission of Titus was temporary, and for the purpose of establishing orderly government, correcting false teaching, and meeting the corruption which was prevalent, is plain from iii. 12, for St Paul instructs him to join him at Nicopolis, assuming that his work in Crete was completed. Professor Gwatkin calls the letters to Timothy and Titus "letters of recall," for not only is Titus summoned to Nicopolis, but Timothy also appears elsewhere soon afterwards (Heb. xiii. 23).

7. The government of presbyters is seen to be in force in the Jewish churches of the Dispersion. St James in his epistle speaks of them as if they were the only spiritual officials (James v. 16). So, too, St Peter appears to know only of presbyters (1 Peter v. 1-4).

It is unnecessary to notice attempts to find in the angels of the seven churches the proof of the ex-

istence of bishops, as few intelligent students now accept that view.¹

What, then, do we learn from the New Testament regarding the ministry?

1. We have already seen how our Lord educated and prepared His disciples, not merely to be His envoys during His life, but with direct reference to His great purpose in the Church afterwards,—that future society of men and women to be gathered into fellowship with Himself, to be the spiritual temple in which He was ever to abide through His Spirit, and through which His redeeming work for the world was to be fulfilled. The training of the twelve had evidently ever in view the carrying out of the purpose which “had been before the foundation of the world,” and which had been made possible by His incarnation, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension into glory, and His receiving gifts for men, being made head over all things to His Church. The apostles were to be His chosen instruments for this end. From the

¹ A condensed summary of the case is given by Prof. Gwatkin of Cambridge in Hastings' 'Bible Dictionary': (1) Bishops and elders are never joined together like bishops and deacons, as separate classes of officials. (2) Phil. i. 1, "To bishops and deacons." If there had been a distinct order of elders it would scarcely have been omitted; so 1 Tim. iii. passes over the elders, though v. 17 shows there were certainly elders at Ephesus and had been for some time past (Acts xx. 17). Conversely, Titus i. 5-7 passes over the bishops, describing elders in their place and in nearly the same words. (3) The bishops described to Timothy, the elders of 1 Tim. v. 17, and those of 1 Peter v. 2, have distinctly pastoral functions. So, too, have the elders of Acts xx. and those described in the Epistle to Titus. (4) The same persons seem to be called bishops and elders (Acts xx. 17-28; Titus i. 7).

first they were fellow-workers with Him, for even during His life His disciples were commissioned to do the works which He Himself did (cf. Mark i. 39, iii. 13-16, vi. 12; Luke ix. 6; Matt. ix. 35). This throws light on the saying on which a greater superstructure of inference than the words necessarily bear has often been built, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."¹ They were to be witnesses for Him, to continue His work, and to carry into the world the peace and the love, unity, and sanctity, which in His later hours He was so gloriously teaching and so earnestly praying for. For that end He promises to send the Comforter to guide them into the truth, to call to their remembrance all that He had done and taught, and through the same Comforter the world was to be convinced of sin and righteousness and judgment. "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This last probably refers

¹ Bishop Westcott, than whom there is perhaps no more reliable interpreter of St John's Gospel, believes that these words were spoken to all the disciples, and not confined to the eleven apostles. If so, it is a commission to the ecclesia rather than to the apostles alone. There is a parallel passage (St John xvii. 18) in which similar words are used apparently in reference to the first mission of the disciples when they were sent out to declare the good news of the kingdom, to heal the sick and cast out devils, which had been the work of Jesus Himself during His own ministry, and it was apparently a similar work which is alluded to when He sends them forth once more to be His envoys in the world after His ascension.

to the disciplinary work of the Church, and was a promise apparently made also to the Church and not exclusively to the apostles (Matt. xviii. 18). His breathing on them, accompanied by the solemn words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," was assuredly the giving to them the grace of the indwelling Spirit for the work committed to them. But while these suggestive words—spoken after the resurrection and to be taken along with the solemn counsels given to them ere He suffered, and the immeasurably solemn prayer of the great High Priest on their behalf and on behalf of those who were "to believe on Him through their word"—indicate a special position for His apostles and a specially influential work to be fulfilled by them, it is not easy always to distinguish what is said to the apostles from what is intended for the whole ecclesia.

The command to observe the Supper of the Lord till He came again was not given to the apostles only, but through them to the ecclesia. In like manner the command to make disciples of all nations was equally applicable to the future Church as a whole. Nor is government in any special or clear form assigned to the apostles. Dr Hort may seem justified in his statement that there is no express indication of power to govern being specifically given to the apostles, although the subsequent history of the Church plainly shows that they *did* govern, and must have had authority to do so, because the Church universally acknowledged their supreme position. In short, it is impossible to read the New Testament without recognising Divine

authority as involved in the apostolate. At the same time, there is a remarkable absence of evidence to show that Christ ever formally prescribed the nature and type of government which was to be instituted permanently in His Church.

2. When we follow the actual history of the Church under apostolic guidance, we discover a similar absence of any precise form of ministry having been pre-arranged for the Church. Government was of course essential to the existence of the Church as a society, but when we trace the actual course of events, and notice how the diaconate was established to meet a felt want, and how, while charismatic ministries were certainly directly endowed "from above" in the most literal sense, yet the actual institution of the local and permanent ministry by the apostles betrays no hint of preconceived plan,¹ we learn that a characteristic of the apostolic organisation was freedom under the guidance of the indwelling Spirit.²

¹ "In the apostolic age we have seen that the offices instituted in the ecclesiæ were the creation of successive experiences and changes of circumstance, involving at the same time a partial adoption first of Jewish precedents by the ecclesia of Judea, and then apparently of Judean Christian precedents by the ecclesiæ of the Dispersion and the Gentiles. There is no trace in the New Testament that any ordinances on this subject were prescribed by the Lord, or that any such ordinances were set up as permanently binding by the Twelve or by St Paul or by the ecclesia at large. Their faith in the Holy Spirit and His perpetual guidance was too much a reality to make that possible" (Hort's *Eccles.*, p. 230).

² Instead of acknowledging the freedom which marked the charismatic character of the prophets and teachers, and the authority which that manifest presence of the Spirit of itself conferred, Bishop Gore, as if anxious to bring into harmony with his theory the fact that prophets

For the presbyterate of the Christian Church seems to have its roots in the existing eldership of the Jewish ecclesia. It was adopted apparently from the old ecclesia rather than a matter of fresh creation by the new.¹ This does not imply that the Jewish elder—the “zaqen”—and the Christian elder were identical, or that the old office was transferred to the new ecclesia. The connection between the two may have been as remote as that between circumcision and baptism, or the Passover and the Lord’s Supper. Yet that it was the elder and not the priest (ἱερεὺς) who was taken as the type, however distant, of the Christian minister is suggestive. Priesthood was associated with sacrifice, and finds its fulfilment in Christ and in the priesthood of believers, while the Jewish elder represented government wherever there was a synagogue. But there was a wide distinction between the Jewish and the Christian office. The Christian presbyter, as we shall see, was more than a disciplinarian. His functions were chiefly spiritual.

As far as the New Testament is concerned, we have found that the presbyter-bishop—combining the two names as identical—is the only fixed local ministry besides that of deacon. The

and teachers laid hands on Barnabas and Paul, has to postulate that these men—viz., the prophets and teachers—“*presumably* had received either Christ’s own command before He left the earth, or (like Paul and Barnabas) the recognition by the laying on of hands of those who were apostles and prophets before them of that divine mission which their miraculous gifts evidenced” (‘Christian Ministry,’ p. 267). This is, of course, pure supposition.

¹ See Lightfoot’s ‘Christian Ministry,’ p. 17; Hatch’s ‘Organisation of the Early Christian Church,’ p. 62; Hort’s ‘Ecclesia,’ p. 62.

passing away of the charismatic ministry and of the apostleship in its original form properly belongs to the post-apostolic period. The presbyter-bishops were ministers whose duties were not confined to discipline, as they are sometimes alleged to have been confined,¹ for they were to be "apt to teach"; to "take heed to themselves and to their doctrine"; and "to feed the flock of God,"² which surely were duties of a spiritual character."³ We have no clear

¹ Dr Hatch, as we have seen, is so much under the control of his studies in Jewish and Greek customs that he transfers too completely the characteristics of the Jewish elder and of the Greek *ἐπισκοπος* or *ἐπιμελητής* to the Church officers who bore the same names. Dr Harnack, again, because of his rejection of the pastoral epistles, omits evidence which to us seems at once authentic and indispensable. Dr Sanday, in his interesting and able article in the 'Expositor' (1887), shows the influence of Harnack's teaching, because, on account of the bishop and deacon being frequently conjoined, but never the presbyter and deacon, he concludes that there was an original and continued difference in their functions; but there is really no evidence touching the nature of the offices of bishop and deacon to be derived from the collocation of the two names. What that really signified we cannot now tell. Dr Sanday acknowledges, though not so unreservedly as Dr Lightfoot, the practical identity of bishop and presbyter during the latter half of the apostolic age. In the same volume of the 'Expositor' there is an interesting paper by the late Rev. J. Macpherson, M.A., accentuating the authoritative position of the presbyter.

² 1 Tim. iii. 2, iv. 16; 1 Peter v. 1, 2.

³ Dr Sanday, in his lucid paper ('Expositor,' 1887, p. 107), agrees with Harnack as to there being little evidence regarding the exercise of spiritual functions by the presbyter-bishop, but it seems impossible to understand what was meant by the exhortations given to presbyter-bishops (Acts xx. ; 1 Peter v. ; Titus i. 9; 1 Tim. iv. 16) unless these indicated distinct spiritual functions. It is true that we have nothing said as to the Eucharist being celebrated by presbyter-bishops or by any one else, except when St Paul is mentioned on a single occasion, and the Didache shows that in the case of that ecclesia (*circa* A.D. 100) it was a charismatic prophet who, in the absence of an apostle, presided at the Eucharist. With that exception we have no light whatever as to

statement as to whether they presided at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, but the fact that they were regarded as "having the rule" over the ecclesia in which they were placed, and that in all probability they had all been ordained, as was Timothy, would indicate that in the absence of apostles or prophets they would "offer the gifts." This seems confirmed by the rule given in the Didache (*circa* A.D. 100), that when no prophet

any rule in the ecclesia when no apostle is present : the one command that "all things be done decently and in order" is the great guiding principle which is imposed. Again, that the Didache does not mention the presbyter at all, but only bishops and deacons, indicates that the term bishop was used by the writer as synonymous with presbyter, as it is also so used in the Epistle of Clement. If not, the absence of any notice of an office so assuredly important, were it a distinct office, and not synonymous with bishop, would be unaccountable. If, however, the Didache did combine the two under the name bishop, then we read (Did. xv. 1-2), "Elect therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek and not lovers of money, and truthful and approved; for they too minister to you the ministry of the prophets and teachers: therefore despise them not, for they are those that are the honoured among you with the prophets and teachers." The laying on of hands by the presbyters along with St Paul seems to be denuded of its spiritual value by Dr Sanday, "because there is the intervention of the prophets." We fail to see how this intervention deprives the laying on of hands by the presbyters of spiritual value. Again, Dr Sanday builds much on the phrase, "Let the presbyters that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and teaching." His belief that this excludes the idea of every presbyter-bishop being called to teach or preach, because it implies that there were those who did not labour in teaching or preaching, is surely too much. One of the qualifications of the presbyter-bishop was that "he should be apt to teach"; but that ideal may not have been always realised in the early Church, just as it is far from being realised in the modern. The fair reading of the passage is that there were some distinguished as teachers and others as rulers, even as in the Church now there are some who may be weak preachers but wise leaders.

was present the bishops and deacons were to officiate. The presbyter - bishops also ordained (1 Tim. iv. 14).¹

¹ If the pastoral epistles must be attributed to the middle of the second century, as Dr Harnack asserts, then this passage appearing at such a time would indicate the continuance of the presbyter as the chief local officer with power to ordain up to a period later than the letters of Ignatius.

"Of officers higher than the presbyter-bishops," says Dr Hort, "we find nothing that points to an institution or system, nothing like the episcopal system of later times. In the New Testament the word *episcopos*, as applied to men, mainly, if not always, is *not* a title, but a description of the elder's functions. On the other hand, the monarchical principle, which is the essence of Episcopacy, receives in the apostolic age a practical though a limited recognition, not so much in the absolutely exceptional position of St Peter in the early days at Jerusalem, or the equally exceptional position of St Paul throughout the ecclesiæ of his own foundation, as in the position ultimately held by St James at Jerusalem, and also to a limited extent in the temporary functions intrusted by St Paul to Timothy and Titus when he left them behind for a little while to complete arrangements begun by himself at Ephesus and in Crete respectively" (Hort's Eccl., p. 232).

LECTURE IV.

SECOND LECTURE ON THE MINISTRY. SUBJECT— THE MINISTRY IN THE SUB-APOSTOLIC PERIOD.

II. We now pass from Scripture to the earliest documents following the New Testament era—that is to say, up to the middle of the second century.

The discovery of the Didache¹ (*circa* A.D. 100; Harnack, 130-160 A.D.) throws new light on sub-apostolic customs, but it will be difficult for the advocates of existing ecclesiastical systems to find support in the Didache for any exclusive claims. It gives a most interesting and curious picture of the Church, probably at the end of the first century, for we cannot believe it to be of a much later date. It is of little consequence in what region it was written—whether it belongs to the Jewish Christian Church beyond Jordan or to Egypt. It, at all

¹ The Didache, or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," or "Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations," is contained in a manuscript discovered in 1873 by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia, in Asia Minor. It was found by him in the library of the Monastery of the Most Holy Sepulchre, in the Phanar, or Greek Quarter of Constantinople, and forms a document of high importance for historians of the early Church.

events, represents a condition of things suggestive of the transition period between the apostolic and a later age. We find "apostles" mentioned, but they are no longer the apostles of the New Testament, but missionary evangelists who are not expected to settle in any place, and whose claims are regarded with a certain suspicion, as if they had a tendency to settle as a burden on believers. The *Didache* also brings into prominence the position of the charismatic prophet. He appears here as occupying the place assigned by St Paul, "first apostles, secondly prophets," because whenever the genuineness of his claims had been tested and recognised by the ecclesia, he was at once assigned the chief place in the Church. As long as he is resident he presides and celebrates the Eucharist, and is entitled to pray extempore as the Spirit moves him. When there is no prophet then the bishop (presbyter-bishop), and not the wandering apostle, takes the highest place and "offers the gifts." This description reveals a condition peculiar to a special period when the organisation of the Church was, as it has been well named, "fluid," and not yet settled into permanent moulds; or it may have been peculiar to a certain locality. If it belongs to any later time than the early sub-apostolic era, it indicates that the Episcopacy advocated by Ignatius had certainly not become, as he asserts, universally received. In whatever light we find it, the *Didache* gives no countenance to claims of an exclusively authoritative character which have been urged by various sections of the modern Church, whether by so-

called "Catholics" or "Presbyterians" or "Congregationalists," and may therefore form a warning to all Churches against overweening confidence as to details.¹

But turning to the sub-apostolic Fathers, we have—

1. The Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthian church, probably not later than A.D. 97—that is, nearly contemporary with the *Didache*, if not earlier. In that epistle, as is to all intents and purposes universally acknowledged,² there are

¹ See paper on Dr Moberley's treatment of the *Didache*, Note I. p. 142.

² Bishop Gore, indeed, sets himself to prove what, in view of the letters of Clement, Polycarp, and the Shepherd of Hermas, may seem a hopeless thesis when he says "that in the West no more than the East did the supreme power ever devolve upon the presbyters." While confessing that "the evidence of Polycarp taken alone indicates that the Churches in the West were governed simply by a council of presbyters" (*'Church and Ministry,'* p. 334), yet he holds that such a supposition "does not satisfy all the evidence of Clement's letter or of Hermas." He discovers in Clement's letter the following phrases: "Ye did all things without respect of persons, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who had the rule over you, and giving all fitting honour to the presbyters among you" (Clement, ch. i.) "Let us esteem those who have the rule over us; let us honour the aged [or presbyters] among us; let us train up the young men in the fear of God" (Clement, ch. xxi.) And again, referring to the apostles, he says: "They appointed those already mentioned [that is, presbyter-bishops], and afterwards gave instructions that when they should fall asleep other approved men should succeed them in their ministry. We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them [that is, the apostles], or afterwards by other eminent men with the consent of the whole Church, . . . cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry." On these grounds Bishop Gore rests the opinion that there was a class indicated by the term "rulers" distinct from and above the presbyter-bishop, and that these or suchlike were the "eminent men" who with consent of the Church appointed and ordained presbyters. We could accept such a theory only if the

only two orders of localised ministry mentioned, and the object of the epistle is to establish the authority of the presbyters over parties in the Church which had been rebelling against them.

Clement himself does not style himself a bishop, but writes in the name of "the church sojourning at Rome to the church sojourning at Corinth," and his silence as to there being any local ecclesiastical official higher than the presbyters may be held to prove decisively that in Corinth at least there were not three orders of regular ministry up to the end of the first century.

2. The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

language of Clement clearly indicated this meaning, or if there was no more obvious way of explaining these passages. There were two classes of local officers, the presbyter-bishops and deacons, and of those the presbyter-bishops were "rulers" in the local churches as the Pastoral Epistles indicate. Why postulate another unknown order here? If there was such an order present, either in Corinth or elsewhere, with authority to rule over the church of Corinth, why did Clement not direct his letter to them as well as to the presbyters, or indicate clearly their existence? "If Corinth had had a bishop in Clement's time, or were remarkable or blameworthy in having no bishop, we could scarcely have failed to hear of it in a letter called forth by the deposition of certain elders" (see Prof. Gwatkin, 'Bible Dictionary,' vol. i. p. 441). Bishop Gore seems at one point to admit this. "It is quite true," he says, "that there is no local authority in Corinth above the presbyters: Clement's language about submission to them postulates this." But he does not rest there, for, passing on, he is guilty of the strange and suggestive anachronism, "It may be also acknowledged that it is an unwarrantable hypothesis that the see (!) of Corinth was vacant when Clement wrote." And then he says, "But it does not therefore follow that there is not in this epistle the recognition of a superior authority, though it has as yet no representative in the particular Church addressed" ('Church and Ministry,' p. 322). This is a supposition pure and simple, without historical foundation, and scarcely worthy of so scholarly a writer.

was written in the second century. He was a disciple of St John and a contemporary of Ignatius. In this letter, and in spite of the influence of Ignatius, his contemporary and the first setter forth of Episcopacy, Polycarp, himself Bishop of Smyrna, knows of no other order in Philippi than that of presbyters and deacons, nor does he find fault with them for being without a bishop.

3. Still later the curious book called ‘The Shepherd of Hermas’ (probably about A.D. 140, although the date is very indeterminate), written to Rome apparently, knows only of presbyter-bishops, and they are described as those who “presided over the Church.” Dr Salmon, in his article on “Hermas” in Smith’s ‘Dictionary of the Bible,’ says: “Hermas seems to use the words *episcopos* and *presbyteros* as synonymous, and he always speaks of the government of the Church being in the hands of elders, without giving a hint that one elder enjoyed authority over others.”

Even Bishop Gore frankly acknowledges this fact when, summing up the evidence, he writes: “There is a view (which is undoubtedly supported by the Epistle of Polycarp taken alone) that the Churches in the West were governed simply by a council of presbyters who had no superiors over them, and who therefore must be supposed to have handed on their own ministry”; and he adds: “There is no objection on ground of principle to this conclusion viewed in the light of the apostolic succession. These presbyter-bishops legitimately ‘ordained’ and fulfilled episcopal functions, because these func-

tions belong to the equal commission they had all received. Subsequently at later ordinations this full commission was confined to one of their number, and the rest received the reduced authority which belonged to the presbyterate of later Church history. Such a process would not represent the elevation of any new dignity from below but the limitation of an old dignity to one, instead of its extension to many, and that in accordance with the precedent set by St John.”¹ So far he concedes almost all we contend for, but he no sooner concedes than he withdraws the concession, and his reasons for doing so are by no means convincing. He does so “because it makes the strong tradition of the mono-episcopal succession, which meets us in the latter part of the second century, and the undisputed succession of the single bishop, almost unintelligible.” In other words, he puts aside the plain evidence of Clement, Polycarp, and Hermas, because it interferes with a “tradition,” and renders “almost unintelligible” what is found, not at the time of these writers, but at the end of the second century. One accustomed to the reasoning of science when similarly dealing with a hypothesis would expect the confession that the hypothesis, not the facts, had broken down.

He then adduces what apparently is deemed an argument for the existence of a kind of Episcopacy in the shape of some authority higher than the presbyters, even in the churches to which Clement and Hermas alluded. Because the name presbyter could still be used for both orders in the days of

¹ Church and Ministry, p. 334.

Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, he holds it to be "maintainable that there was instituted at Corinth and Philippi one amongst the presbyters who, though he held the unique powers which afterwards belonged to the episcopate, was still included under the common name of presbyter-bishop." He no sooner states this, however, than he confesses that it is "unsupported by the documents he is considering." Why, then, bring it forward? And stranger than all, in view of such a confession, he proceeds to state the convictions to which he had been led, "that in the West no more than the East did the supreme power ever devolve on the presbyters," and yet in the next sentence he writes, "There was a time when they [*i.e.*, the presbyters] were (as the Epistles of Clement and Polycarp bear witness) the chief *local* authorities—the sole ordinary occupants of the chief seat." But as if too much had been conceded, he builds on the distinction he had himself created between the local and non-local, the theory that over those presbyters and not yet localised were men of prophetic inspiration or of apostolic authority and known character, "prophets" or "teachers" or "rulers" or "men of distinction," who in the sub-apostolic age were ordained to the sacred ministry, and in certain cases would have exercised the chief teaching and governing authority. But there are too many alternatives here, and the whole is sheer speculation, not history. "Gradually," he goes on to say, "these men, after the pattern set by James in Jerusalem or by St John in the churches of Asia,

became themselves local presidents or instituted others in their name. Thus a transition was effected to a state of things in which every church had its local president who ranked amongst the presbyters—a fellow-presbyter like St Peter—sitting with him on the chief seat, but to whom was assigned exclusively the name of bishop.” If the premises were clearly established, and the position and influence and authority of these unlocalised and charismatic men were clearly in evidence, this would be an arguable account of the evolution of bishop in the modern sense. But even then, if it is the account of a development, a growth leading to a new office unknown in the apostolic Church, in which there was confessedly but two orders of permanent local ministry, and if the third order arose out of the force of circumstances, through the natural evolution of history or because of schisms and heresies, as Irenæus and Jerome assert (see ‘Expositor,’ 1887, p. 10; Lightfoot, p. 204; Hatch, p. 98), it may well appear as if mono-episcopacy was, to quote the oft-repeated phrase of Bishop Gore, “from below and not from above,” got not by direct divine appointment but through an arrangement naturally reached by the Church through traceable influences, and in the manner which seemed most advisable,—then we may boldly assert that in the immediate sub-apostolic period, and before these influences were fully felt, the divine right of Episcopacy as a separate order was not recognised in the Church of the West till the Council of Trent, and not then—except in England.

4. The position of the ministry in the Roman Church is somewhat obscure. If we were to believe Hegesippus (about the end of the second century) as quoted by Eusebius, there was a succession of bishops following St Peter; but his evidence is open to grave suspicion.¹ There is much to indicate the absence of any bishop, in the modern sense, in the Roman Church for more than a century.²

¹ We await the promised article by Mr Turner in the 'Magazine of Theological Science' on the value of the Roman lists. The article in which he deals with similar lists connected with the succession in Jerusalem shows how utterly unreliable his testimony is.

² The clearest and most succinct statement of the evidence regarding the Roman Church is given by Bishop Wordsworth ('Ministry of Grace,' pp. 125-134). The following is a brief summary. Even St Ignatius, while usually singling out the bishops in the churches he addresses, makes no mention of a bishop when writing to Rome. Hermas (*circa* A.D. 140) represents the government of the Roman Church as being in the hands of the college of presbyter-bishops. Irenæus (*circa* A.D. 180) writes of those whom Hegesippus calls Bishops of Rome as if they had been presbyters,—“The presbyters before Anicetus,” “before Soter.” Hippolytus in the third century describes the heretic Noetus as tried by the presbytery, if not at Rome, then at Smyrna, in the very region where Ignatius had most influence. In the Church Order ascribed to Hippolytus (*circa* A.D. 200) it is prescribed that one of the bishops and presbyters is to say prayers and lay hands on the persons to be ordained. But the offices of presbyter and bishop were becoming distinguished. Though a bishop is said in the same Church Order to be “in all things considered equal to a presbyter except in the name of the throne, and in the matter of ordination, because the power of ordination is not given to the presbyter.” This shows the commencement of change. If a deacon was made bishop *per saltum*—that is, at once, without becoming a presbyter first—he received ordination in the same form as the presbyters, but with the name of bishop substituted; and this continued in the Roman Church to the ninth century. This fact clearly assumed that the bishop and presbyter were essentially the same order. A similar evidence may be gathered from the 13th Canon of the Council of Ancyra, A.D. 314,

5. In the church of Alexandria we have a peculiar and interesting picture given by Jerome at the latter end of the fourth century, and by more than one writer in the fourth or fifth centuries, as to what existed there. Jerome,¹ quoted by Dr Lightfoot, shows that "at Alexandria, from Mark the evangelist down to the times of the Bishop Heracles (A.D. 233-249) and Dionysius (A.D. 249-265), the presbyters always nominated as bishops one chosen out of their own body, and placed him in a higher grade; just as if the army were to appoint a general, or deacons were to choose from their own body one whom they know to be diligent and called him 'archdeacon.'" "Though the direct statement of this father," says Bishop Lightfoot, "refers to the appointment of the bishop, still it may be inferred that the function extended also to the consecration. And this inference is borne out by other evidence. 'In Egypt' writes an older contemporary of Jerome, the commentator Hilary, 'the presbyters seal [*i.e.*, ordain or consecrate] if the bishop be not present.'² This, however, might refer only to the

where it is said that "country bishops are not permitted to ordain presbyters or deacons, nor even is it permissible to city presbyters to do so except with the consent or commission of the bishop in each diocese." If so, the power to ordain was recognised in the fourth century as inherent in the office of presbyter, for the commission of the bishop was no more than the giving of a "faculty" to exercise that power. He could not commission a layman or deacon to do so, but he gave a faculty to a presbyter because his office implied ordaining power.

¹ Epis. Ad. Evang., vol. i. p. 1082.

² Ambrosiaster on Ephes. iv. 12, quoted by Bishop Lightfoot, 'Christian Ministry,' p. 78, as well as another passage, "Nam in Alexandria et per totam Ægyptum, si desit episcopus, consecrat (v. l. consignat) presbyter."

ordination of presbyters and not to the consecration of a bishop. But even the latter is supported by direct evidence, which, though late, deserves consideration, inasmuch as it comes from one who was himself a Patriarch of Alexandria. Eutychius (A.D. 933-940) writes as follows: 'The evangelist Mark appointed along with the Patriarch Hananias twelve presbyters who should remain with the Patriarch to the end that, when the patriarchate was vacant, they might choose one of the twelve presbyters, on whose head the remaining eleven laying their hands should bless him and create him Patriarch.' The vacant place in the presbyterate was then filled up that the number twelve might be constant. 'This custom,' the writer adds, 'did not cease till the time of Alexander (A.D. 313-326), Patriarch of Alexandria.' It is clear from this passage that Eutychius considered the functions of nomination and ordination to rest with the same persons"¹ ('The Christian Ministry,' p. 78).

¹ An attempt is made by Dr Gore to explain this away by the extraordinary supposition, without a shred of evidence, that the presbyters were ordained as bishops "*in posse*" ('Church and Ministry,' p. 143). If there were no bishops but such as became bishops by the election of presbyters and without any further ordination or consecration at the hands of other bishops, have we not here another instance of authority coming "from below"? For if the bishop had been regarded as a separate and higher order rather than a grade of dignity, if that order could only reach authority because of an exclusive right given from above and through consecration by that higher order, we fail to see how the presbyters could ever have been made bishops "*in posse*," or could gain the grade of bishop simply through election by other presbyters and without any other rite. The supposition of presbyters being bishops "*in posse*" shows the extremity to which some of the advocates of Episcopacy, in the modern High Church sense, are placed; but that

A remarkable confirmation of this statement has been found since Bishop Lightfoot wrote, and is given by Mr E. W. Brooks in the 'Journal of Theological Studies,' July 1991, pp. 612, 613. The extract quoted from the letters of Severus is in these words: "And the bishop also of the city renowned for its orthodox faith, the city of the Alexandrians, used in former days to be appointed by presbyters; but in later times, in connection with the government which has prevailed, the solemn institution of their bishop has come to be performed by the order of bishop, and no one contemns the strictness which prevails in the holy churches and has recourse to the former practices, which have yielded to the later clear, strict, approved, and spiritual ordinance." "Here," says Mr Brooks, "we have a distinct statement four hundred years before Eutychius, that it was at one time the custom for the Alexandrian presbyters to ordain their bishop; and as Severus wrote in Egypt, he may be assumed to give the tradition current in the church of Alexandria in his time. . . . It does not, of course, follow that a tradition is true, but it is difficult to think that a tradition so contrary to the ideas of the time could have arisen if it had not been founded on history." Mr Brooks also gives an-

presbyters were, up to a date which carries us beyond apostolic times, not only bishops "*in posse*" but bishops in fact, in the old sense of the presbyter-bishop, holds good if history is to be depended upon at all in large sections of the Christian Church, and the change to mono-episcopacy applies chiefly, if not solely, to the churches in Asia and perhaps in Syria and Palestine.

other evidence from the apophthegms of the monk Poemon.¹

It is quite possible, perhaps probable, that St John may have sanctioned a system which he found

¹ To show that the early belief as to the identity of presbyter and bishop did not die out wholly in the middle ages, we have an interesting illustration of its survival in the writings of Marsilius de Manandrius of Padua, a Franciscan of the fourteenth century and professor in Vienna. Dr Cooper of Glasgow University kindly drew my attention to what Marsilius says in his work 'Defensor Pacis sive Apologia pro Ludivico III. Imp. Bavaro, 1599.' "Nor ought it to escape you," he writes, "that these names presbyter and bishop were in the primitive church synonymous, although applied to the same person to denominate different aspects of his office." After quoting Jerome and the passages in the New Testament which confirms this view, he proceeds: "After the time of the apostles the number of priests [*i.e.*, presbyters] having notably increased, in order to avoid scandal and schism the priests elected one from among themselves who should direct the others and take order in all things bearing on the exercise of the ecclesiastical office and service and the distribution of the things offered; but if every man took his own way the economy and service of the temples should be disturbed. He became elected for the regulating of other priests, and appropriated, according to the usage of later times, to himself alone the name of bishop, as it were superintendent. . . . But the said election, or institution by man, has given to the man so elected nothing further of essential worth (*meriti*) or of sacerdotal authority, but simply a certain power of household government in the house of God, a certain power of ordering (*ordinandi*) and ruling other priests, deacons, and other office-bearers. In like manner to a prior in these times is given power over monks, not any intrinsic equity or other power. . . . So also the deacons chose from among themselves an archdeacon, to whom such election does not by any means convey a greater essential worth or holy order more ample than the diaconate, but only a certain human power of ordering and regulating other deacons." This theme is illustrated in a variety of methods. Whatever the worth of the arguments, it is at all events most interesting to find a learned Franciscan in the fourteenth century writing as a presbyterian might write in vindication of the essential character of the presbyter's office. It is also

existing in Asia Minor, and which presented at the time many practical advantages. But this is very different from a formal apostolic institution and, as has sometimes been asserted, an ordinance issued by St John and other apostles authoritatively establishing the new order.

We have accordingly the strongest evidence that up to the time when Ignatius wrote his letters, and, in the case of Alexandria and Rome, long subsequent to these letters, there were churches in which the evidence seems to prove that there was no local or other authority higher than the presbyter-bishop.

We come now to the letters of Ignatius, which contain the first formal assertion of three orders of ministry, and assign at least primacy to the bishop. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, throughout the seven epistles which, since Dr Lightfoot's learned work on the Apostolic Fathers, are usually accepted as genuine,¹ undoubtedly enforces three orders of ministry with a clearness that can leave no dubiety as to their existence at that time in the Church in the East.

He would be an unwise defender of Presbytery who would deny that Ignatius, probably early in the second century,—*i.e.*, some time between 105 and

interesting to recall the connection between Marsilius and our countryman William of Occam. Both fought against the papal curia in defence of the rights of Louis of Bavaria. They probably met, for Occam was resident in Munich, and indeed to him was attributed the conversion of Marsilius to the freer thought which we find in the 'Defensor Pacis.'

¹ We must not forget, however, that Dr Lightfoot's position has been strenuously assailed by some Continental scholars.

117,¹—gives an emphatic representation of the existence of the episcopate as distinct from the presbyterate, although he is evidently mistaken when he asserts that it was universally acknowledged. This may lead us to consider here the position of those who, like Bishop Lightfoot, would agree with all we have said as to the position of the presbyter-bishop, especially in the Churches of the West, well on into the second century, but who rest the divine right of the three orders on their supposed institution by St John, as well as on the letters of Ignatius. The fact that Ignatius was the Bishop of Antioch leads these critics to associate his authority with a circle of influence which, it is asserted, had its focus in consular Asia, and chiefly in Ephesus, where it is believed the apostle St John ruled till his death (*circa* A.D. 97). There can be no doubt that the Churches in the East, when they come into view in the second century, present contrasts rather than resemblances to the organisation prevailing in the West. Ignatius seems to represent, perhaps in exaggerated terms, the position which then held good in Asia, Syria, and perhaps Palestine. The actual rise of the new dignity attached to an office which elsewhere was synonymous with that of presbyter cannot be clearly traced, although the picture drawn by modern writers of the influences which led to this result is in several respects credible. Assuming the presidency of St James in Jerusalem, this would naturally lead to familiarity with the idea of one selected to represent the college of presby-

¹ See Smith's 'Dictionary of Christian Biography,' vol. iii. p. 211.

ters, who thereby became a kind of type or what developed into the episcopate. The pressure of heresy and the threatening of schism, together with the trials affecting the Church from the secular arm, would enforce an argument for the advantages of the monarchical system over the less concentrated authority of the presbyter-bishops, who were ecclesiastically equal. This cause is largely dwelt on by many early writers. Unity appeared to be more secure when the Church was ruled by single officers, and when rapid action had to be taken.¹ But such a reasonable theory for the rise of Episcopacy is insufficient for those who claim for it a special and divine institution as an order superior to presbyters and deacons. It is quite possible for us to acknowledge the early and extensive growth of the episcopate in the regions already indicated, and at the same time emphatically to deny that its institution was originally different from the presbyterate, or that the exclusive claim for its authority urged by Episcopal advocates is to be attributed to the direct authority either of Christ or His apostles. The evolution of the episcopate is a different matter from its establishment at the first "from above."

The claim to apostolic authority rests on the belief partially accepted by Bishop Lightfoot, that St John in his old age, and possibly in conjunction with other surviving apostles, authorised the three-fold ministry, assigning the right of ordination and supreme government to the bishops, while the

¹ Lightfoot, p. 39.

presbyter-bishops, who hitherto, as we have already shown, had power to rule and to ordain, were deprived of this office, although remaining as a council subordinate to the bishop. St John and the others supposed to be with him, being apostles, carried, according to this claim, the commission of Christ, and all that they enacted had therefore a divine sanction, and, consequently, there has ever since been only one permanent and divine form of Church government, only one valid method by which the ministry can be continued and the validity of the sacraments secured. It is not enough for this claim that Episcopacy rose out of the force of circumstances—as Dr Hatch tries to show, and which we have considerable reasons for believing—in order to meet the pressure of heresy, and in a manner similar to that which determines the growth of institutions in the State. “The divinity, which is the divinity of order,” is not sufficient for these advocates of Episcopacy. The claim is that the supremacy of bishops comes “from above,” that it is divine, and that to deny their exclusive privileges is to deny the authority of Christ exercised through His apostles. Accordingly the position thus taken depends almost wholly on whether there is sufficient evidence to establish the fact that St John, possibly along with other apostles, did establish for all time the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon to be the only authoritative government in the Church of Christ.

What, then, is the evidence for this?

We may recollect the light which St John’s own

epistles throw upon the tone of his mind respecting those "who love to have the pre-eminence" (3 John 9). It proves nothing, but it is, at all events, suggestive in this connection.

The supposed action of St John rests on certain traditions. Bishop Lightfoot touches on the grounds on which we may believe those traditions respecting St John. It is, however, to be noticed that Bishop Lightfoot does not assert that the supposed appointment of bishops by St John was of the nature of an apostolic decree condemning or superseding throughout the universal Church the form of government which, it is conceded, continued in the West long after St John's death, and in some places up to the third century.

But when we turn to the actual proof we must be struck, in spite of Bishop Lightfoot's great name, by the complete absence of contemporary evidence. Clement of Alexandria, who tells us that St John went from place to place to establish bishops, writes in the latter half of the second century. Tertullian, who alludes to the sequence of bishops in proconsular Asia being traceable to the authority of St John, was not born till nearly the close of the second century. The Muratorian Fragment, quoted by Lightfoot as speaking of St John with fellow-apostles and bishops being gathered in a kind of council, is obscure as to date and authorship: it is usually assigned to some time near the end of the second century. When we test the credibility of Hegesippus by other statements of his we feel bound to hesitate before accepting what he says with

implicit confidence. He is quoted, *e.g.*, for another line of evidence, showing that there was a direct succession of bishops from St James in Jerusalem, and therefore the "episcopate," as Dr Gore informs us, "was not only developed under apostolic patronage, but was in direct continuity with the apostles as represented by St James, who, though not one of the twelve, ranked and acted with them; and certainly, whether the presbyters were ever known as bishops, the episcopal authority never belonged to them."¹ In reference to all this we have to recollect that Hegesippus wrote probably in the latter half of the second century, and that we have nothing preserved of what he originally wrote, for, practically, all we learn of him is through Eusebius. However, the accurate investigation by Mr C. H. Turner into the lists of the Jerusalem succession given by Hegesippus clearly proves how unreliable his evidence is.² This was not known when Dr Lightfoot wrote. It is, therefore, probable that Hegesippus, writing at such a comparatively late date, when Episcopacy was established in the districts with which he was most familiar, would scarcely fail—as Hegesippus sometimes did not fail—to be affected by the influence of prevalent opinion. This is seen not only in his lists of the succession in Jerusalem, but also in what he gives as authentic regarding the Church at Rome, which cannot well be reconciled with earlier authorities. Therefore we do not feel much confidence in the evidence of Hegesippus,

¹ Church and Ministry, p. 275.

² Journal of Theological Studies, July 1900.

who, in his account elsewhere of St John, gives much that is evidently purely legendary.¹

We are led to believe that a large amount of the traditional influences attributed at those dates to St John arose from the desire to find apostolic authority for the episcopate which was then being pressed upon the Church. The spread of Episcopacy, and its increasing assumption of authority, may have originated the traditions quite as likely as any real knowledge of the historical truth of the traditions. The tradition regarding St John may, in short, have been as much the consequence as the cause of the episcopal propaganda.

The probability that this was the case is greatly strengthened by certain considerations. If St John, at the close of the first century, with or without the support of other apostles, instituted bishops as supreme in three orders of ministry, it may well appear unaccountable that Clement, writing about the same period, seems ignorant of any such exercise of apostolic authority when he establishes the authority of the presbyters in Corinth, and mentions no office higher than theirs. Nor does Polycarp, himself a disciple of St John, writing early in the second century, show any knowledge of the fact. Nay, so far from alluding to such action on the part of St John, he recognises no higher ecclesiastical office in the Philippian church than the presbyter-bishop. He gives no hint that such a condition was wrong or contrary to apostolic

¹ We refer to his account of the circumstances under which his Gospel was written.

injunction. Hermas in like manner, whether we date his Visions at the beginning or at the middle of the second century, is equally silent. He also seems to know of no higher office than that of presbyter. And perhaps still more suggestive are the letters of Ignatius himself; for, if he was aware that the new order—new certainly in the churches of the West—had been created by the express act of the apostle John, it is inexplicable that he should not only never quote so august an authority, but never even mention his name in any of his letters, while he does refer to St Paul and St Peter. It is also noteworthy that when writing to Rome he either knew that there was no bishop there, or, if he believed there was one, he strangely fails to address him, or allude to bishops at all as representing that Church; while, with one exception, he never does omit either expressly to address the bishop or allude to episcopal authority in all the letters sent to the churches in the East. In the letter to Smyrna, which is the exception, while he does not address it to Polycarp its bishop, he strongly enforces his authority. The argument from silence is, of course, not conclusive, but when there is, besides, evidence of the kind which we discover in Clement, Polycarp, and Hermas, then the silence of Ignatius as to the presence of a bishop in the only letter he wrote to a church in the West receives a significance which would otherwise be wanting. These facts, belonging to a period which is earlier than the one at which the tradition respecting St John's establishment of Episcopacy appears, throws

suspicion on the historicity of the authorities on which Eusebius rests, and lends strength to the supposition expressed above, viz., that the bringing in of St John's authority is probably the consequence of the desire to establish Episcopacy,—in short, that St John's authority was a sort of afterthought which gradually gained hold on the Church.

The only argument which appears to have a suggestive bearing on the other side is the rapid rise of Episcopacy in proconsular Asia, where, from his residence at Ephesus, St John's influence would naturally be felt. But even granting such a claim, we have no reliable information as to the manner in which he appointed bishops and the extent of the authority he may have assigned to them. If the episcopate was elevated by St John into a primacy over the presbyterate, we are completely in the dark as to the extent and character of that primacy, or as to the conditions he may have laid down for its exercise; and we have not a shred of evidence as to his apostolic authority having been given for the special claims urged by Ignatius, who never himself cites St John.

In short, the chain which it is asserted binds the three distinct orders of bishop, presbyter, and deacon to the apostles as divinely instituted and permanent orders, confessedly fails to appear with any clearness at the precise point where its presence is vitally important. The links binding the chain to apostolic authority have not, as we have shown, any existence in the New Testament, wherein the evidence is all the other way; and that what existed

in the New Testament was revolutionised in the last years of St John seems so highly improbable, and the evidence for it is so obscure, as to compel the utmost caution in accepting such vague traditional pleas.

Granting the existence of a widely diffused episcopate in the regions of the East, and confessing our ignorance as to the precise sources from which it arose,—whether through the influence of St James's presidency in Jerusalem, or the rise of heresy, or the recognition of monarchical government in some sense by St John,—undoubtedly Ignatius is the first to present it as actually existing, and to recommend it with earnestness, although only in those of his letters which were addressed to Oriental Churches.

But the letters of Ignatius prove too much; their very vehemence of pleading is scarcely consistent with the alleged universal acceptance of episcopacy. Nor can one pass from the New Testament or from the contemporaneous writings of Clement, Polycarp, and Hermas, and we may add the *Didache*, without feeling that he enters a totally different atmosphere, and is in contact with a condition of things altogether unlike what these other documents reveal when he reads Ignatius. We feel we have entered a new world when we read, "We should look upon the bishop even as we look upon the Lord Himself" (Ep. to Ephes., vi.) "Give ye heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you" (Ep. to Polycarp, vi.) "It is becoming, therefore, that ye should be obedient to your bishop, and contradict him in nothing; for it is a fearful thing

to contradict any such person. For no one does [by such conduct] deceive him that is visible, but does [in reality] seek to mock Him that is invisible, who, however, cannot be mocked by any one. And every such act has respect not to man but God" (Magn., iii.) "Now it becomes you also not to treat your bishop too familiarly on account of his youth, but to yield him all reverence, having respect to the power of God the Father, as I have known even holy presbyters do, . . . submitting to him, or rather not to him, but to the Father of Jesus Christ, the bishop of us all" (Magn., iii.) These quotations, which might easily be greatly multiplied, make us feel how far we have wandered from the New Testament when we come to Ignatius.

It is true that writers like Dr Moberly understand the attitude of Ignatius as not being so uncompromising as the plain reader of his words would receive them. Dr Moberly says: "The letters as they stand are not incompatible with the working theory of an episcopacy in which jurisdiction over presbyters could hardly be said to exist. I do not mean to suggest that there was no such jurisdiction, but that it certainly had not become the full-fledged thing that is sometimes supposed."¹ Again, in a note referring to a quotation from the letter to the Smyrneans, he says: "The words do not necessarily imply in the bishop any more authority than would be possessed among us by any chairman or president of any authoritative

¹ Ministerial Priesthood, p. 194.

council. The 'authority of the chair' means, in fact, the authority of the council as a whole."

Such views cannot but be gratifying to Presbyterians; and yet, in spite of this criticism by so competent a scholar, we affirm that the letters of Ignatius are the first documents which clearly assert the position of the bishop as distinct from the presbyter, and its primacy in a gradation of orders in a threefold ministry. Without these letters we might conclude the existence of bishops by the fact that they are in evidence in certain places, as Polycarp is called Bishop of Smyrna and Ignatius of Antioch, but that would be insufficient to establish the position which Ignatius's assertion of primacy assigns.

The background of apostolic authority found in the New Testament has, at the best, a very indirect bearing here, and the pre-eminency of St James in Jerusalem only illustrates how one came to be chief in a council of presbyters; but it is in Ignatius that we first see clearly defined lines separating three grades in Asia Minor and Syria. Other writers take the sharp edge off the apparently uncompromising and sudden character of Ignatius's assertion, by suggesting that he is dealing only with churches in which Episcopacy already existed, and did not mean to interfere with other churches in which the presbyterate was supreme. If this is the case, then Ignatius presents the rare picture of an ecclesiastic who can rise above the special claims of Presbytery or Episcopacy, and, recognising apostolic authority in both, whether united as in the presbyter-bishop

of the West, or differentiated as he had seen it in the East, could enforce the great ends of unity and truth through obedience to constituted government.

But if not, then there are some obvious difficulties suggested by the position of Ignatius, on the supposition that he knew that St John had instituted the three orders of which he was the eloquent exponent.

If he knew that St John had instituted the three orders which he so earnestly sets forth, and that they were "from above" and "divine," it is remarkable that he has no rebuke, or even counsel, for churches like Corinth and Philippi, in which no higher order than that of the presbyterate existed. It would, for example, be inconceivable that Dr Gore or Dr Moberly could pass through Scotland—if Scotland had no representation of Episcopacy—and could visit our congregations and yet have not a word to say respecting their neglect of what they believed a divinely instituted order. And that Ignatius should travel through Philippi, where only those who, because of antecedent theological beliefs, assert that the threefold ministry had any place, and yet, so far as history reveals, had not a word to say of remonstrance, seems extraordinary. He either recognised the succession through presbyters, as did Clement, and probably Irenæus, or he must in duty have shown them how "unapostolic" and "invalid" their orders were; but of this we have not a hint in history. Nay, we have something less than silence, for his contemporary Polycarp writes to one of those very churches, and treats the

presbyter-bishop as validly supreme. That Ignatius cannot always be taken *au pied de la lettre*, or his authority accepted in such matters without question, is evident when we read his extraordinary statement that Episcopacy was established at that date "throughout the world." He either knew or did not know what the ecclesiastical condition of most of the Western churches was, as we have seen it clearly shown in the New Testament and by contemporary evidence. If he did know, then his assertion betrays the extraordinary carelessness or rashness of an over-keen partizan; and if he did not know, his ignorance deprives his evidence on other questions of the weight which many attribute to it. The true explanation, we believe, may be found either in the ambiguity still prevailing as to the title of bishop as identical with presbyter, or to the fact that he was really more tolerant as to the relationship of bishop and presbyter so long as the succession was maintained, and, above all, some authority recognised as a centre of unity and truth, than his letters taken by themselves would indicate. He writes as one brought up under different associations and forgetting for the moment the state of the ecclesiæ, which, from the first, had preserved an order of ministry that was to him unfamiliar. We Presbyterians in Scotland can understand this. Accustomed as we are to a curious and often provoking ignorance of our Church, its history and its beliefs, on the part of many who from their learning in other regions of study, and the nearness of their geographical position, might be expected to know

better, Ignatius is to us not an altogether unknown type of ecclesiastic.¹

When we come to Irenæus we discover a curious blending of the episcopate and the presbyterate. That he himself is bishop, and that he recognises the three orders, may be freely granted, and yet there is in his work symptoms of what is still inchoate and of a transition period.²

It is not our intention to go beyond the strictly sub-apostolic period. We cannot, however, forget that even after Episcopacy was established the recollection of the more primitive and Apostolic Church order remained. So it is that Jerome, —whom Erasmus described as “without contro-

¹ In illustration of the above the following questions, put by educated English people, sometimes Anglican clergy, to friends of the writer, may be quoted: “Do you use *our* Commandments in Scotland?” “Is baptism celebrated in the Church of Scotland?” “Do you use the same Bible as we do in England?” An Academician asked another friend, “Does your Church believe in the Holy Trinity?” And a still more striking instance is the extraordinary mistake of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, who in his first charge identified the doctrinal teaching of the Presbyterian Church on the Eucharist with what is commonly called Zwinglianism. This is not, however, so surprising as his acceptance for his own Church of Lutheranism.

² Does not Bishop Lightfoot make too much of the loose statement of Irenæus when, quoting from Acts xx. 17, 28, he confuses the original and speaks of St Paul as having called together “the bishops and presbyters from Ephesus and the other neighbouring cities,” and on this ground seems to assert that Irenæus had no knowledge of a time when Episcopacy was not enforced? The fact that he quotes inaccurately is insufficient to prove that he was really ignorant of what the text actually signified (see Irenæus, iii. 1, 2, 2, 2, 3; iv. 26. 2, 3, 4, 5). Still further, when Irenæus alludes at length to the letters of Clement and Polycarp, it may be presumed that he had carefully read these; and if he did, he must have had knowledge that Clement and Polycarp knew only of the presbyter-bishop.

versy the most learned of all Christians and the prince of divines," and of whom Bingham said, "Jerome will be allowed to speak the sense of the ancients,"—although belonging to the close of the fourth century, thus writes when commenting on the Epistle to Titus: "A presbyter is the same as a bishop. And before dissensions in religion were produced by the instigation of the devil (*diaboli instinctu*), and one said, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Cephas, the churches were governed by a common council of presbyters. Afterwards, in order to destroy the seeds of dissensions, the whole charge was committed to one. Therefore let the presbyters know that according to the custom of the Church they are subject to the bishop that presides over them; so let the bishops know that their superiority to the presbyters is more from custom than from the appointment of the Lord, and they ought to unite together in the government of the Church." And again, alluding to Philippi, he says: "It is but one city, and assuredly in one city there could not be a plurality of such as are now called bishops. But Paul spoke indifferently of bishops and presbyters, because at that time being but the same, they had the same names." Firmilian may also be quoted, who was somewhat earlier than Jerome, but a man of importance in the third century, seeing he presided over one of the Councils of Antioch. In a letter written by him to Cyprian, who of all others was *facile princeps* the High Churchman of the early Church, he says, "All power is in the Church, in which presbyters preside

and have the power of baptizing, imposing hands [*i.e.*, confirming], and ordaining.”¹

The increasing spread of Episcopacy during the second century may be granted, until in Cyprian it assumed an authority which increased in the Latin Church until the Reformation. The last appearance of the unchanged presbyter-bishop as supreme in local churches is in the Epistle of Polycarp, and if not so clear, there is sufficient to establish its continuance at the unknown dates at which the *Didache* and *Visions of the Pastor of Hermas* were written. But there can be little doubt that the evidence, as Bishop Lightfoot, Dr Hatch, Dr Hort, and, we may add, Bishop Wordsworth of Salisbury—than whom we can name no more competent English scholars—have shown, goes to prove that up to the first and second decade of the second century there are unmistakable indications of the presbyter-bishops in continuity from the apostles in certain important ecclesiæ in Europe, their position being recognised and enforced by Clement and Polycarp, and later on by Hermas.

While Episcopacy was undoubtedly in force and increasing in power in Asia, Syria, and Palestine, Ignatius stands in a measure alone. He writes as a man nurtured in a church life quite different from that of the ecclesiæ of Greece and of Rome. This

¹ The words are a Latin translation from the original Greek, and we are compelled to recognise in the phrase “*majores natu*” an attempt at rendering *presbuteroi*. The words are these: “*Quando omnis potestas in gratia in ecclesia constituta sit, ubi president majores natu qui et baptizandi et manuum imponendi et ordinandi possident potestatem.*” —‘*Cypriani Epistolæ*,’ p. lxxv, ed. Hartel.

contrast between the East and the West has received a clear and authoritative recognition from Bishop Wordsworth of Salisbury in his work on the Ministry of Grace. The condition in the Western churches seems to be in continuity from what St Paul established, and it lasted beyond the lifetime of St John, and even later than the martyrdom of Ignatius.

We are thus landed in a peculiar position. We have clear evidence of the sole primacy of the presbyter-bishop, and as clear proof of the early rise, perhaps within the cognisance of the Apostle John, of the bishop as differentiated from the presbyter. We have also in Clement and in Irenæus the full recognition of direct succession from the apostles both of the presbyterate and of the episcopate. Clement knows only of the succession in Corinth through the presbyterate, and Irenæus seems to place the succession through both offices on the same footing (Irenæus, iii. 2. 2, 3. 2; iv. 26. 2, 5).

How are we to reconcile these facts with modern claims? We have already touched on Dr Gore's supposition of some one, not a bishop, taking the authority of a bishop and forming a "background" of authority superior to the presbyter-bishop.¹ But if there was such a grade in Corinth, it must have been superior to the bishop as well as the presbyter, as these two are undoubtedly identified there; and, if not an apostle, which is almost certain, it must have been a grade unknown to history.

But there are some features in the letters of

¹ See additional Note II., p. 145.

Ignatius which it is necessary to bear in mind. While we have given the first or second decades of the second century as the probable date of his epistles, there is no certainty as to whether they may not be much later. Harnack, for example, is by no means certain that his martyrdom was so early as the days of Trajan, and Lechler says the further back his death is put the greater the difficulty created by his letters. Again, we may be almost shocked by the position he gives bishops: "It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God. He who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop does serve the devil" (Smyrn., 9). Yet we must remember that he writes almost as strongly as to the honour due to the presbyters, conjoining them with the bishop (Magn. 6. 7; Trall., 13. 2; Ephes., 11. 2); and he also conjoins the three (bishop, priest, and deacon) as one harmonious authority representing that of God (Smyrn., 8. 1, 9; Magn., 13; Trall., 2). Apart from these three orders he says there is no church (Trall., 3). A closer examination of the letters shows that the purpose for which he wrote them was not so much to place the bishop in authority over the presbyters as to enforce unity in the Church, and to make the authority of bishop, priest, and deacon the centre and guarantee for unity. "As to the Ignatian Epistles," writes Lechler, "we find, after a careful and impartial examination of their contents, that it is not a recommendation of the episcopal authority which forms their central point, that it is not the exaltation

of the bishop above the College of Presbyters which is the object in view, but it is rather the communion of believers among themselves, the unity of the Church, which is the ruling idea. . . . Inasmuch as the Church is a well-arranged whole only in connection with its appointed officers, Ignatius always expresses his admonition on behalf of unity in such a way as to require subjection to the bishop, presbyter, and deacon." So writes Dr Moberly also: "Nor is there anything in these letters to indicate the nature or conditions, or indeed (strictly speaking) even the existence, of a jurisdiction over presbyters exercised by the bishop. So far are they from being a polemic to enhance episcopate jurisdiction or dignity, that—except in respect of the one fact that adherence to the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, or, more shortly, adherence to the bishops, is the concrete test of reality of proper church fellowship—the letters are not as they stand incompatible with a working theory of Episcopacy in which jurisdiction over presbyters could hardly be said to exist. I do not mean to suggest that there was no such jurisdiction, but that it certainly need not have been the full-fledged thing that is sometimes supposed. The letters are compatible with its being still inchoate and undefined to almost any degree."¹ And again: "If St Ignatius's expressions are compatible with an episcopal autocratic jurisdiction, they are not less compatible with an Episcopacy which wields no jurisdiction save as chairman and symbol of the

¹ 'Ministerial Priesthood,' p. 194.

presbyteral body. Whatever there was, or was to become, must be looked for elsewhere than in these letters." Such criticisms, which, we are glad to say, are in harmony with many recent utterances of Anglican scholars, if they do not give away altogether the case for Episcopacy founded on the Ignatian letters, certainly tend to reduce their value as emphasising claims on behalf of the episcopate as superior to the presbyterate, and to make what Ignatius says consistent with the theory that at that stage in history the presiding presbyter came to be called bishop, while his position was really consistent with his being as yet of the order of presbyter, although it was gradually emerging into the episcopate in its later sense. "We must remember that," as Lechler says, "the episcopate, according to the letters, is a church office whose authority is confined to the one city church in which it exists, not at all possessing importance and authority in relation to a number of communities, or the whole Church, as was the case after the second century. In short, Ignatius's episcopate is an office for one community, but not as yet over any church. Moreover, his bishops are not successors of the apostles; rather does he enjoin them to be obedient to the presbyter as to the apostles of Jesus Christ, — *ὑποτάσσεσθαι τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ ὡς τοῖς ἀποστόλοις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*." ¹

While, therefore, the Epistles of Ignatius indicate the establishment of bishops in Asia Minor and

¹ Trall., 2. 2; Lechler, 'Apostolic and Post-apostolic Times,' vol. i. p. 330.

Syria, there is very little, if anything, to connect them with diocesan Episcopacy and its exclusive privileges as now taught.

And now to sum up the evidence of the sub-apostolic period. We have already seen what is to be gathered from the New Testament, and our study of the sub-apostolic Fathers leads to the conclusion, certainly as far as the churches of the West are concerned, that *the position of the presbyter-bishop was locally central and authoritative*; that only two orders existed in these churches—that of the presbyter-bishop (the names being synonymous) and deacon: the presbyter-bishop was supreme.¹ Even when the bishop emerges he is at first but a presbyter taking precedence. The episcopate is not at the most a new order, but a primacy. The associations belonging to the modern diocesan bishop are completely out of place when we are dealing with the bishop of the East at the time of Ignatius.

¹ An interesting illustration of the survival of the earlier belief as to the episcopate being a dignity and not a higher order of ministry, is found in the ancient Armenian Church. The orders are divided into Inferior and Superior. The Inferior orders are (1) Doorkeeper, (2) The Reader, (3) The Exorcist, and (4) The Acolyte. The Superior orders are (5) Sub-deacon, (6) Deacon, (7) The Priesthood, or in other words, the Presbyterate. As regards this last it is said, "This being the chief among Holy Orders, the Armenians observe still more solemnly the performance of the ceremony"; and again, "Such are the rites made use of in the Armenian Church for conferring the high holy order." There are above it in authority and administrative power, Bishops, and above Bishops the "Catholicus," but they are not regarded as possessing distinct and superior orders. (See 'The Sacred Rites and Ceremonies of the Armenian Church,' by the Rev. Dr Issaverdeus, Member of the Academy of St Lazaro at Venice. Printed in the Armenian Convent of St Lazaro, Venice, 1876, pp. 443-463.)

His duties were then confined to a single congregation—the ecclesia of a city or town where he was located,—and he was surrounded by the Council of Presbyters, and with the deacons serving. This picture suggests Presbyterian government rather than Episcopal in its modern form.

NOTE I.

DR MOBERLY'S TREATMENT OF THE DIDACHE.

DR MOBERLY'S treatment of the Didache is characteristic of the attitude of mind in which he approaches early Church history. He comes with a preconceived dogma regarding the Church, and when there are facts which do not easily fit in with his hypotheses, the greatest ingenuity is displayed in order to create harmony. In this way he deals with the Didache, minimising its importance as a witness to very early usages in some church, however unknown, whether in Syria or in Egypt. He will learn nothing from its language about baptism, as indicated by certain primitive customs, because it seems to him "inconceivable as a Christian exposition." Because it is not what he, armed with his previously formed beliefs, would expect, it must be rejected as an untrue picture. But it certainly cannot be accepted, as he seems inclined to view it, as a representation of a Jewish rite. Perhaps it is Judaism "veneered" with Christianity; but if so, it none the less may be held as giving a picture of baptism in some ecclesiæ that were Christian.

In like manner the account of the Eucharist is denounced as "inconceivable," "immeasurable," "inadequate." He can, in short, find the Didache in many

ways interesting and instructive only on the assumption that it is local and in some respects "ignorant of the Church of the first century." But this is surely an easy way of disposing of evidence. It is, however, when we notice his dealing with the ministry as represented in the Didache that we measure the effect of Dr Moberly's ruling principle—viz., that we must come to the study of history with previously formed dogmatic beliefs.

What the Didache clearly shows is a Church in which quite a curious survival of influences is in evidence, and a type of organisation and of customs characteristic of a transition period. We have presented two classes of ministry: the one local and permanent, the other consisting of "apostles" and "prophets" who represent not what is local, but what belongs to the Church at large. They come and go, although the latter may become resident, because the resident presbyter-bishop may himself be a prophet. Bishops and deacons, or, as Dr Moberly—falling back on Scripture usage, and apparently not without purpose—interprets them, "presbyters" and "deacons," form a regular local ministry. The second class consists of those inspired with certain charismatic gifts, and bearing the commission, not of any order in the Church such as the first apostles, but the direct commission of the Holy Ghost sealed by manifest powers. Dr Moberly seems to identify the apostles and prophets of the Didache, but without sufficient proof. The apostles of the Didache have certainly nothing in common with the apostles of Scripture. They were practically missionary preachers, envoys, evangelists, and, as far as we can learn, not sent out by any church or ecclesiastical authority. They were not necessarily prophets, for they are distinguished from them. "All the apostolic Fathers" (writes Lechler, vol. ii. 3. 19), "with the single exception of Hermas, restrict the name apostle exclusively to the twelve. Ignatius, for example, uses the names in his letters not less than fifteen times." "The men of this calling"—that is, the wandering evangelists in the Didache—"are styled *apostoloi*." They were

not necessarily prophets, for they are distinguished from them. The prophets, on the other hand, although often "itinerating dignitaries," had much in common with the prophets described by St Paul. The exalted position they held is shown in the rule that when the claim to be a true prophet was acknowledged, he at once took the first place and celebrated the Eucharist, even when bishops and deacons were present; and he had the right to exercise the gift of extempore prayer. One or two remarkable indications of Church life are given. In the *Didache* it is the *ecclesia*, the congregation of believers, which is to appoint bishops and deacons, and nothing is said of how or by whom they were ordained. It is the *ecclesia* also which apparently was to try whether the claims of the apostle or prophet were genuine. The apostles were a class that was under suspicion, for they had a tendency to stay too long at the cost of the community, and the believers were to be on their guard and to reject any who were too slow in moving on. The contrast between such apostles and those of the New Testament is therefore very marked. The prophets also were tried by the *ecclesia*, but when adjudged true prophets they at once became supreme: they were to be treated as "high priests," and only in their absence did the local bishops and deacons perform the service the prophets had fulfilled. All this is simple and plain enough, although it is the picture of a peculiar condition characteristic of an age of transition. But how does Dr Moberly treat these facts? On the face of them they are not easily reconciled with the episcopal theory. They have, however, one element which gives him satisfaction, for the *Didache* seems to show that there was a power higher than that of the presbyter-bishop. He calls them by the name of presbyter (although that name does not occur in the *Didache* at all), for the title bishop would have come in rather awkwardly for Dr Moberly. He holds that there is a background of something like the old apostolic authority, but he says it is only "like a ghost" of that

period. It is one which is "rapidly disappearing in a cloud of illusionary vagueness"; "it is justly dying," because apparently Dr Moberly does not like the "direct endowment of special inspiration," which has little to connect it with that constituted apostolic authority which he claims for the episcopate that he advocates. At one time he seems to imagine that the prophet of the Didache was a bishop "imperfectly understood" (!), and he concludes with a remarkable admission that the true substitute for the original background of the apostolate—that is, the episcopate as representing the early authority of the apostles at the time of the Didache—probably at the close of the first century—was being "solidified gradually under apostolic direction and appointment," although "by no means as yet fully organised, still less fully instituted, through the length and breadth of the Church." This is, verily, something very different from the clear-cut hypothesis of "a direct divine institution," or, as Bishop Gore puts it, "not only a body established by Christ, but an organised body with differentiation of functions impressed upon it from the beginning."

NOTE II.

BISHOP GORE AND DR MOBERLY ON CLEMENT.

DR MOBERLY'S treatment of Clement is similar to that of Dr Gore, but with some original features. We have already seen how the unprejudiced scholarship of Bishop Lightfoot disposes of the belief that by Clement's "other eminent men," or "other distinguished men," we are to understand some background of unknown authority higher than the presbyter-bishop, and how he makes these phrases refer simply to the presbyter-bishops, who were charged

with the government of the whole Church, and to maintain the continuance of the apostolically instituted order of presbyter-bishops. No background is suggested by him; and we might ask, in the absence of apostles, what background could there be? It would be necessary to presuppose some new order which never emerged into light at all, and without any known sanction given to it to appoint the presbyter-bishops. Dr Gore seems to suggest that they were prophets, but his doing so is somewhat inconsistent with the depreciatory tone in which these charismatic men are elsewhere treated both by Dr Moberly and himself. It is a little too much, and goes beyond all trustworthy evidence, to assert that under "St John's last arrangement the authority of the prophets and preachers passed to the bishops." How could it? The authority of the prophets depended on their charismata—the charismata constituted the authority,—and surely it was impossible even for St John to pass on such gifts, which were the direct endowment of the Holy Ghost, to any order of men. The apostles themselves did not, and never pretended that they could, create them. How, then, could St John transfer such heaven-bestowed gifts, not to individuals, but to permanent Church officials, to continue to them as an order to the end of the world?

Indeed no argument against the positions maintained both by Bishop Gore and Dr Moberly can be more cogent than the perusal of the passages in their essays in which they display such extraordinary ingenuity in devising one supposition after another, in order to escape the plain lessons which the Epistles of Clement and Polycarp and the Visions of Hermas so clearly set forth. In contradiction to Bishop Lightfoot's interpretation of Clement (and he is not a mean authority), Bishop Gore assumes throughout that the rulers Clement mentions are not presbyter-bishops, and when he comes to Hermas he repeats his utterly unproven assertion about Clement, by declaring that the following words cannot refer to the presbyters: "You will tell, therefore, those who preside over the

Church to direct their ways in righteousness, that they may receive in full the promises of great glory";¹ and again: "Wherefore I now say to you who preside over the Church and love the chief seats, Be not like to drug-mixers," &c. "Take heed, therefore, that these divisions of yours do not deprive you of your life. How will ye instruct the elect of the Lord if you yourselves have not instruction? Instruct each other, therefore, and be at peace among yourselves." And yet Bishop Gore, just as we saw him finding an antithesis in Clement between rulers and presbyters when it is said, "Let us esteem those who have the rule over us, let us honour the presbyters," so, on a similarly slender basis, one too which Dr Lightfoot refuses to accept as a true representation, he imagines the existence of some unknown grade in the Corinthian church which is supposed to have become "solidified" into the episcopate. In the Shepherd of Hermas, also, he founds a similar conclusion on the phrase, "You will tell those who preside over the Church,"¹ as compared with the expression in Vision 3. 9, 7, "I say to you who preside over the Church and those who occupy the chief seats." He believes two grades are indicated because the clauses seem to be "in apposition." But as we find presbyters elsewhere spoken of as presiding and ruling, and again as loving the chief seats, the antithesis discovered by Bishop Gore is unreal.² In short, the attempt to find proof for the existence of a vague unnamed office or authority higher than the presbyter-bishop in the churches in the West betrays such anxiety to discover some basis, however "ghost-like," for the as yet unformed episcopate distinct from the presbyterate, as completely to weaken the case which it seeks to establish. What, for example, are we to make of a passage like this, previously quoted, in which he sums up his convictions:

¹ Vision, 2. 6.

² Besides, the second clause as to the chief seats is itself a doubtful reading, for it does not occur in the Ethiopic version of Hermas.

“There was a time when they [presbyters] were (as the Epistles of Clement and Polycarp bear witness) chief *local* authorities—the sole orderly occupants of the chief seat. But over them, not yet localised, were men either of prophetic inspiration or of apostolic authority and known character—‘prophets’ or ‘teachers’ or ‘rulers’ or ‘men of distinction’—who in the sub-apostolic age ordained to the sacred ministry, and in certain cases would have exercised the chief teaching and governing authority. Gradually these men, after the pattern set by St James in Jerusalem, or by St John in the churches of Asia became themselves local presidents or instituted others in their place. Thus was a transition effected to a state of things in which every church had its local president who ranked amongst the presbyterate—a fellow-presbyter like St Peter—sitting with them on the chief seat, but to whom was assigned exclusively the name of ‘bishop.’”¹

To end in a series of possible alternatives,—the “either this,” or “that,” or “another,” of those who may possibly have exercised a chief authority over, and ordained, presbyter-bishops—anything, in short, rather than yield to the plain conclusion that the presbyter-bishops in Corinth and Philippi, and probably throughout the West, were originally not only chief local authorities, but after the death of the apostles, after even the death of St John, had no one over them, and did ordain as they ordained Timothy,—such statements show a certain unwilling consciousness on Bishop Gore’s part as to the absence of any clear evidence. And the contrast is great between the assertion with which his essay begins—postulating the Church as a body “organised and its functions differentiated from the first by divine authority”—or with the ease with which he afterwards uses comparatively late patristic evidence, and the weakness and hesitation which affects his argument as he deals with the apostolic and sub-apostolic period, when he has only the “either” and “or” of a series of suppositions

¹ ‘Church and Ministry,’ p. 335.

to fall back upon. All this can leave but one impression upon the mind of the attentive reader of his work, that he fails to prove his case from evidence belonging to the first century. By the middle and end of the second century his task becomes certainly easier. The early rise of the episcopate as distinct and superior to the presbyterate may be freely acknowledged, but its claims to having been originally an apostolically instituted order, from which the presbyterate could alone derive ordination if it is to secure validity—these claims must be held to be baseless.

The summing up of conclusions by Dr Moberly is not less curious and interesting:¹ “There is nothing which St Clement emphasises more than the appeal to apostolical order based on apostolical succession”; and he speaks of this, not, as Clement says, because they knew there would be strife on account of the office or title of the episcopate, but as part of the foresight of the apostles, and their careful provision for “the perpetuity of the ministerial office by devolution from themselves.” “Did this include,” he asks, “with or without a name, with or without ostentatious assertion of pre-eminence, what we understand to be the essential substance of diocesan Episcopacy? From the text of the latter we can hardly decisively reply. But suppose for a moment that to the mind of Clement it did *not*. In that case, of course, we reach no merely neutral or indefinite, but a positively negative, result. With so strong a theory about provision for apostolic succession St Clement must either have included (what we call) Episcopacy or he must have excluded it. Either he must have believed that presbyters *as such* were the final rulers and ordainers, or he must have believed that in the last resource they ruled and ordained only with and through one who, if he was in any sense apart from or over them at all, could only conceivably (on his principles) have been so by virtue of being apostolically commissioned to be so. And if he were himself, according to the universal tradition, the leading and

¹ ‘Ministerial Priesthood,’ p. 185.

official figure of his Church, he must himself have acted, as matter of fact, *either* in such a way as illustrated substantially the principles of an apostolic unity embodied in a single representative *persona*, *or* in such a way negate and exclude it, and, so far as in him lay, to stamp it, if ever after him the idea should be introduced, with the brand of an unapostolic novelty and falsehood. His theory of apostolic devolution, as the essential condition of any authorised ministry, is too distinct and too peremptory to admit of the subsequent insertion of a new ecclesiastical office, behind and above the highest which he recognised himself. We cannot in fairness approach the consideration of his phrases without such presuppositions as these. But if we look on them in the light of any such considerations, we can hardly doubt that, indefinite and ambiguous as they seem to be, even his actual phrases do agree better with the assumption of the presence than of the absence of a government in the Church beyond the merely presbyteral; while their verbal mistiness will perhaps, on second thoughts, seem rather a natural than a strange result of a condition of things in which realities were in advance of words, in which the inner substance of Episcopacy had an existence without a title, and therefore also as yet without perfectly adequate definition and a distinction of thought." And then he goes on to give similar reasons to those of Bishop Gore, as to the existence of some background of authority higher than the presbyter-bishop, which, as we have seen, Dr Lightfoot denies. This is surely extraordinary reasoning. We remark that his alternative, "he must either have included what we call Episcopacy or excluded it," is not forced upon him. If he means by Episcopacy the exclusive claims urged in modern times, there may be good ground for his position: but suppose that in the days of Clement presbyterate and episcopate did not exclude each other in Corinth; suppose, as his epistle seems clearly to indicate, that they were interchangeable terms for the same office, and that the succession for which he pleads was one preserved in and by that office, and that therefore Clement, if a

bishop at all in the modern sense, which is more than doubtful, did not feel that in recognising a succession from the apostles in the presbyter-bishops he was either illustrating "the principles of an apostolic unity in one representative *persona*," or "stamping it ever after him with the brand of an apostolic novelty and falsehood." This is surely reading our own modern ideas into the mind of Clement. His theory of apostolic devolution was neither so "distinct or peremptory" as to forbid the rise of the episcopate in the manner which Dr Lightfoot and others assert—viz., "not formed from the apostolate by localisation, but out of the presbyterate by elevation." As Bishop Gore confesses, such a belief does not affect the (to him) vital matter of succession at all, and so the nightmare which Dr Moberly describes vanishes when fuller light is thrown on the case.

But what are we to make of the last part of the paragraph we quote, and, in spite of the "peremptory manner" in which the episcopate is said to have been divinely and exclusively instituted at the first, try to imagine what can be meant by the condition of things in which "realities were in advance of words, in which the inner substance of Episcopacy had an existence without a title, and therefore also as yet without perfectly adequate definition and distinction of thought?" This sounds, unless it is meaningless, like a sort of nebular hypothesis for the origin of the episcopate—a number of formless and unknown elements in solution, but gradually taking shape and body "although the substance had been always there," yet emerging into view as these elements became "solidified." He urges against Bishop Lightfoot's translation of a critical passage in Clement the strange reason that it must be wrong because "it shuts out all ambiguity, and with it the characteristic mental trait (in Clement) which the ambiguity, just because it is ambiguous, delicately represents." After a curious criticism of Bishop Lightfoot's identification of the "presbyters" with the *ἡγούμενοι* of Clement, because it would deprive the next phrase—"and giving all

fitting honour to the presbyters among you"—of all allusion to the presbyters at all, he proceeds: "Far truer to life is the view that Clement's thought is here really upon the presbyters, though (as yet) he half veils his thought by deliberately accepting the semi-unconsciously suggested verbal antithesis between *πρεσβύτεροι* and *νέοι*. And if so, the phrase *ἡγούμενοι* remains, not perhaps as a title which could, with any reasonableness, be directly translated 'bishops,' but, at all events, as a word which, both in itself and in its place in the context, is suggestive of a conception of Church government such as, to say the least, is imperfectly exhausted in the technical 'presbyterate' taken alone." All this is very mysterious and decidedly of a nebulous character, and when placed beside the clear-cut statement of Dr Lightfoot, that the recognition of the episcopate as a higher and distinct office must have synchronised with the separation of the meaning between bishop and presbyter, in what a haze do we find ourselves when we read what Dr Moberly calls his own "more exact inference that those who have begun to have the thing before they have required the name must be expected to show meanwhile that their language about that which they have is inarticulate, but that even their idea of it is indistinct. While we recognise dim traces of more than presbyteral authority without separation from the presbyteral name, we are not perplexed if the distinction which the language has not yet defined seems often imperfectly present, though yet present imperfectly, even to the thought." Remembering that he is referring to Corinth and Rome in the days of Clement (that is, A.D. 97, a year after the death of St John), therefore after the alleged apostolic institution of the three grades of the ministry, we must feel that either Dr Moberly is giving away his whole case—for what can we make of a recognised ministry by "devolution from the apostles," about which the language of the holders is "inarticulate," and even their idea of it "indistinct and the traces of it dim"?—or he is lost in a mist. If they to whom the institution was given had such

"inarticulate" and "dim" ideas of what it was, where are we to look for testimony for the apostolically instituted ministry of the three orders of bishop, priest, and deacon?

Dr Moberly is fond of indulging in imagining the consequences which must ensue if his theory is not true. Like Bishop Gore, he uses only one alternative as to orders—they must either be transmitted by succession from the apostles or be "humanly devised." This latter phrase is unfortunate. Surely the indwelling and guidance of the Holy Ghost in the Church make the term "humanly devised" worse than inadequate? We presume to say that they would both do well to weigh the thoughtful account of the evolution of the government of the Church given by Dr Hatch, and to a large extent illustrated by Bishop Lightfoot and Dr Hort, as well as the more recent work of Principal Lindsay.

But a still more terrible consequence arises if his theory is not proven, and it appals Dr Moberly. "Then the saintliest bishops and priests in Christian history, whatever they might be in personal endowment, differed not one jot—if we need not *quite* say" (the italics are ours) "in respect of ministerial character or authority, yet at least in respect of the ultimate rationale of principle which constitutes the divine foundation and security of the ministry—from the good men whom the last new sect has chosen to appoint to be its ministers." The latent contempt which, perhaps inadvertently, lurks in these words reveals the greatness of the *reductio ad absurdum* and the terrible result to existing Church dignitaries which, in his eyes, must follow the non-acceptance of his argument. But however this may be, neither we nor Dr Moberly are entitled, in an examination of historical evidence, to throw aside the facts which that examination establishes, because, if accepted, certain consequences might follow; or, in other words, because our preconceived theory would thereby be worse than endangered. It is the same fundamental error which is traceable through the writings of both of these learned

ecclesiastics. They search history to find evidence for conclusions they have previously reached on *a priori* theological grounds, instead of first searching history and then forming their conclusions. We do not think any arguments more cogent could be urged against their contention for the exclusive and divine right of Episcopacy than a perusal of the statements quoted above.¹

¹ Since writing the above we have read Canon Henson's criticism, which anticipates, and in even stronger terms, all we have said regarding Dr Moberly.

LECTURE V.

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

THE doctrine of apostolic succession in the ministry is easily stated. It is based on the assumption that to constitute a valid ministry, and, consequently, the validity of such ministerial acts as the dispensation of the sacraments, it is necessary that the authority through ordination should come down from the apostles in direct succession, by ordained ministers ordaining others. The advocates of Episcopacy lay the greatest stress on this condition. They do not so greatly value the distinction of offices as the possession of this authority, and would regard Presbyterianism with a much more friendly eye, assigning to its orders a validity they now refuse, were they satisfied that it had a true succession from the apostles.¹

“Validity” in reference to the ministerial office is something corresponding to the validity of a commission in the army. A civilian may be a better soldier, an abler strategist or tactician, than a regular officer, but without the king’s commission

¹ See Gore’s ‘Christian Ministry,’ p. 334.

he has no right to exercise these gifts in the army. So in the Church, the fact that a layman is a better theologian, perhaps holier, wiser, more powerful in word and work than the ordained clergy, would be insufficient, for if he lacks the divine commission through ordination, in succession from officers holding theirs from the apostles, he cannot validly exercise these gifts as a minister of the Church.

The Church, which is the Body of Christ, becomes in a measure divided by this doctrine into two parts. The ministers have authority which belongs to them alone, which the Church cannot delegate to them, because it comes by "devolution," passed on from generation to generation by means of rites, such as the laying on of hands, going back to those on whom the apostles first laid their hands. This stream of authority flows quite above and independent of the membership constituting the ecclesia, for it is a stream which carries with it something which the whole body of believers cannot initiate nor intermeddle with, seeing it carries special and otherwise unattainable grace, the grace of orders.¹ This grace conveys authority to the person ordained, who is thereby brought into the line of persons who can show that they have been ordained by others who can trace step by step a laying on of hands back to apostolic days; and because brought within that line (for actual fitness

¹ We do not touch on the cognate question of "character" as taught by the Council of Trent—viz., the seal or impress which indelibly gives power to the ordained to celebrate the sacraments, so that they shall be effectual (Council of Trent, sess. vii. can. 9).

does not necessarily enter into the theory), it is said that to those, and to those alone, God covenants not merely an official authority, but that the sacraments administered by them shall have an efficacy and validity which cannot be securely expected in the case of any other celebrants. How important that grace is we need not describe.

The line of order and authority in the holy ministry is in this way one which lies above the Church as embracing the entirety of the membership of Christ. It is not a result of the life of the body, nor does it derive authority from the body in which Christ continually abides through His Spirit, but comes as it were *ab extra*, or, as theologians express it, "from above," because of a concatenation of certain acts by certain persons, beginning with the apostles, and continued, through the same succession of official acts, to the present hour.

This view of apostolic succession, which is perhaps characteristically Anglican, has naturally provoked many criticisms.

I. It may be said that, *a priori*, it seems too mechanical and arbitrary a method to be accepted as a true account of the manner in which the gift of divine grace in such solemn matters can be regarded. When one recollects the freedom of the Gospel message and the liberty with which Christ has made His people free, as well as the simplicity and directness which characterised the life of the early Church, and the absence of any clear statement in Scripture of such conditions being attached to the due celebration of the Supper of the Lord,

the introduction of such conditions, as necessary for the validity of the ministry and sacraments, seems to be incongruous and incompatible. To believe, for example, that the grace of the holy Eucharist and its power to convey spiritually the body and blood of Christ, so as to be spiritually received and spiritually fed upon "to the spiritual nourishment and growth" of the believer, is withheld by God, or its bestowal not covenanted by God, except he who celebrates the sacrament has been ordained by a bishop and no other than a bishop, or by a presbytery whose presbyters can show that their ordination is in a long line of similar ordinations going back to the apostles, is a belief which would require, it is said, the very clearest evidence of divine authority before it could commend itself to the conscience as a reasonable account of the divine principle of working in so important, almost so essential, a part of Christ's saving work. It appears to be at once too mechanical and arbitrary to suppose that grace is withheld until the properly ordained minister is found, and that immediately on his arrival what was withheld is by appointment ready to pour forth. Men ask whether this is not in principle a Jewish conception and not a Christian. When one turns to the Gospel all is free,—the Saviour and the sinner meet without any mediating condition but the sense of need and faith on the part of the one, and abundant rejoicing mercy on the part of the other. It is true that Christ trained disciples, that He commissioned them to carry on the same

blessed work of healing for body and soul which He Himself exercised; for the words, "As the Father sent Me, even so send I you," seem, according to some authorities, to mean a commission simply to continue the ministry of mercy He Himself had exercised. A similar commission was given when He had previously sent them forth as disciples. They were to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, to heal the sick and cast out devils, and to be witnesses for His resurrection. And such also, it is said, was His commission to them afterwards. "As the Father sent Me, even so send I you," had reference primarily to this continuance of the work of the Lord. There may have been charges given in reference to the founding of the Church during the forty days when He spoke to them of the things of the kingdom, but nothing is told us as to what these instructions were. The words spoken to St Peter had special reference to His confession and the power of the keys, which in His case had exceptional force, as He did actually open the kingdom of God at Pentecost, and also to the Gentile world when he baptised Cornelius; yet, with these exceptions, His promises and commands to His disciples were not confined to them, but applied to the ecclesia which was to be. His command as to baptising and to the observance of the Lord's Supper, and the power to bind and unloose, were commands and promises made to the whole body of believers as well as to the Twelve. "There is," says Dr Hort, "no trace in Scripture of a formal commission of authority

for governing from Christ Himself." "The work that lay before the apostles when His ministry on earth was ended was not in its essence different from before. They had still to make known the kingdom of God by words and by deeds, and this is the sole conception of the work put before us in Acts."¹ Dr Hort cannot be taken as infallible, but if one of his accurate scholarship fails to find in the New Testament anything which indicates the fixing as by divine authority of any particular form of Church ministry to be of permanent obligation in the Church, we may feel that the dogmatism of many pleaders for a *jus divinum*, exclusively empowering any one order of ministry, must be taken with something more than caution. General principles, it is said, are laid down: unity is emphatically enforced both by Christ and His apostles; order and government are manifestly in exercise in the society, which is the ecclesia, where everything was to be "done decently and in order"; but the conception of one type of organisation being instituted, with the endowment of covenanted powers attached to certain officials who are constituted the only channels of sacramental grace,—of this there is not the slightest hint: we must pass over many decades before we discover the rise, even in embryo, of such ideas.

The passage which seems to be the chief basis for the doctrine of succession is 2 Tim. ii. 2, where St Paul exhorts Timothy, "The things which thou hast heard of me among many

¹ Hort's Ecc., p. 40.

witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also"; but it is doubtful whether we should read into these words more than what they plainly set forth as to the necessity for appointing faithful and well-instructed men to be the teachers of the truth. This probably would be the interpretation we should at once have accepted were it not for the use made of it by Clement in his famous letter, when he founds his rebuke to the party in Corinth which was in revolt against the presbyters on the fact that St Paul had appointed them and also a succession after them. It may, however, be maintained that Clement was reading into the passage in Timothy more than what is actually expressed there, as it was not a succession of ministry in the ecclesiastical sense that St Paul was enforcing, but care that those selected to be teachers of the truth should be themselves capable teachers.

So, too, does Irenæus lay stress on succession, sometimes through the bishops, sometimes through the presbyters, and sometimes through the three orders of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. But neither Clement nor Irenæus treats succession as giving "validity" to these orders and to the sacraments dispensed by those who possess them, in the sense of the comparatively modern advocates of the doctrine. What Clement enforces is the apostolic character of the presbyter, and shows that one appointed according to the apostolic injunction was not to be set aside by the ecclesia if he had exercised his ministry faithfully. The very

statement suggests a question as to the converse truth — viz., whether the ecclesia in the case of unfaithfulness had not the power to set aside the unworthy presbyter. But Clement was dealing with factions and asserting order. We are not in a position from anything in his letter to dogmatise regarding what Clement did or did not believe as to the validity or non-validity of sacraments, consequent on whether the person presiding had been ordained by certain officials rather than by others. We must not read any subsequent views into the teaching of so early a Father, for things, even in his day, were very much in a state of solution and transition. Irenæus, on the other hand, is not thinking so much of Church order as of the preservation of apostolic truth, and he falls back on the succession of the line of teachers as a guarantee for the trustworthiness of the traditions being taught in the ecclesia as against the errors that were then rising as a flood. That succession was held by him as a valuable guarantee for the preservation of divine truth is apparent; and we can understand how in that age, when there was no printing-press and when manuscripts were rare, it would be of importance that the traditions of what Christ and the apostles actually taught, as preserved in the churches where the latter had thus taught, should be committed to well-instructed men who should convey them to others. But that apostolic succession was recognised by Irenæus in the modern sense, as the covenanted method by which sacramental grace is bestowed, is another

matter, regarding which there is not a particle of evidence.

2. Another objection is brought from the practical use often made of the doctrine of succession. It may well seem a scandal, or rather a *reductio ad absurdum* of the theory, when it is elevated into an *articulum stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*, and made a test so important that false doctrine, neglect of the Word of God, formalism, and deadness in respect to Christian enterprise, are all excused, because the one feature of ministerial succession atones for all such defects; while, on the other hand, the holding of the truth, sanctity and devotion of life, and the seal of God's spirit in the richness of the fruits of the ministry, are held to be no warrant for ministerial communion if the episcopal link of succession is not in evidence. It may seem a sorry spectacle, *e.g.*, to see the Anglican Church begging for recognition at the hands of Rome, a Church wherein the Word of God is so greatly withheld, superstition and error rampant, and the claims of the Papacy reign supreme; or seeking almost on bended knees for visible communion with the Oriental Churches, that, in spite of many interesting features, have not been for centuries distinguished as being missionary; while, on the other hand, she stands proudly aloof from the Churches of the Reformation at her own door, which have been the holders forth of the Word of life and the devoted messengers of the cross. The archimandrite or priest from the Greek islands is welcomed with delight, while—taking our Scottish Presbyterian Churches as an instance—men

like Chalmers, Tulloch, Caird, Norman Macleod, Candlish, Buchanan, Horatius Bonar, Cairns, are treated as "Samaritans," and kept without the sanctuary. Even if these had not been in the line of apostolic succession—as they certainly were—the principle on which the admission of the one is hailed with joy and the others are excluded must be difficult to defend, not only on Scriptural grounds but as in harmony with the instincts of Christian life. The theory which leads to such practical results cannot, it is alleged, but awaken suspicion.

It must be remembered, however, by such objectors, that a healthier and more reasonable view seems now being taken by some professedly High Churchmen regarding apostolic succession. The light which has been thrown by the scientific researches of modern historians has begun to tell on the rigid school which once represented that learned though often intolerant party. In evidence of this there is an anonymous but remarkable article in the 'Church Quarterly' for April 1902 on "Episcopacy and Reunion." If its treatment of Canon Henson is somewhat severe, and if the writer, like Bishop Gore, can see no other alternative than between the fixed ministry he defends and "an amorphous inarticulate society based upon the shifting sand of a promiscuous discipleship," yet we are pleased to read such statements as these: "The principles of organic life and of a duly exercised authority involved in this conception [that is, apostolic succession] are something far deeper, more true to the modern picture of the universe, than the theories

of apostolic succession which they have inevitably superseded, and which, though adequate for their age, were somewhat symbolical in their manner of presenting traditions. What we mean is, that the larger view which the rise of historical science has opened up to us is not concerned to maintain that the whole Christian ministry sprang as a historical fact out of the original apostles, and then only by means of an unbroken laying on of hands, and none otherwise. It is not concerned to deny that the primitive charismatic ministry may have possessed large independent powers, or that presbyters may, in this community or in that, have received the recognition of the Body of Christ without the specific intervention of St Peter or St John or any of the Twelve.¹ . . . What a due recognition of the principles which the New Testament shows to be involved in the facts of the Church's constitution does demand is, that we shall not treat the rapid extension of the episcopate in the second century as a happy mechanical device invented to meet the inroads of Gnosticism, and not rather as the due and orderly discharge of a function inherent in the inherited life of the Church.² We doubt whether in

¹ Why put it in so ambiguous a form? Why suggest what does not hold true, when the writer must be aware that if St Paul was an apostle he did appoint presbyters, and that presbyters took part in the Council of Jerusalem under the very eye of St Peter, and spread over the Churches of Judea, certainly with the cognisance of all the apostles?

² While the power to develop the episcopate was a function "inherent in the inherited life of the Church," yet that its occasion was the rise of Gnosticism and other errors cannot be denied in view of several well-known patristic statements to that effect. "A wise statesmanship" would have been a happier phrase than "a happy mechanical device."

its wildest development the doctrine of apostolic succession was ever held to involve the delicate question of unbroken links which moved the ridicule of Lord Macaulay.¹ It is for no such nice unspiritual theory that we at any rate contend. But it is, we take it, becoming increasingly evident that no such conditions as have produced the non-episcopal ministries, which took their rise in the sixteenth, seventeenth, or eighteenth centuries, have any parallel in the primitive Church. . . . The fact remains that all the evidence of Scripture and of the continuous Church tradition makes it plain that the ministry never was regarded as a mere matter of arrangement, nor recognised by a body of Christians, however arbitrarily chosen, as constituting a valid claim to act in the name of the universal Church."

As to this last statement, whatever the doctrine of apostolic succession may mean, we who are members of the historic Presbyterian Church have something to say. For it may be asked, Who ever said that the ministry was regarded as a mere matter of arrangement? What we assert is very different—viz., that the episcopate, at least as differentiated from the presbyterate, was largely a growth consequent on the felt needs of the Church. That the diaconate came into existence in this manner is plainly taught in Acts. How the episcopate emerged is still the crux of learned

¹ Yet so recent a writer as Bishop Gore thinks it worth his while to give a calculation on the doctrine of chances, showing that there are 512,000,000,000 in favour of succession! ('The Church and Ministry,' p. 109).

scholars, although Irenæus and Jerome had no doubt about its being caused by the rise of heresy and schism.

But it is not our purpose to discuss the merits of the doctrine of succession. The principle of succession is one thing, and its treatment by Anglicans is another; and the object we have now in view is to set forth the historical relation of the Church of Scotland in regard to the claims founded by Episcopalians on their supposed exclusive possession of a true succession.

The position which we shall attempt to establish is that *the Church of Scotland possesses a succession through the presbyterate as truly as any Episcopal Church does through the episcopate.*

That the reformation in England and in Scotland did not proceed on the same lines is too notorious to require statement. Speaking generally, the former, after largely accepting the doctrines of the Continental Reformers, assumed another type from that which was adopted in Scotland; but at first there was a close harmony between the English and the Scottish Reformers. At the time of the Reformation the English Church was very much of the same mind as to the position of the presbyter as that which prevailed among the Continental Churches, and was held by the Church of Scotland. "In the year 1537 there came out a book called 'The Institution of a Christian Man,' made by the whole clergy in their Provisional Synod, set forth by the authority of the King's Majesty, and approved by the whole Parliament, and commanded to be preached to the

whole kingdom, wherein, speaking of the sacrament of orders, it is said expressly that although the Fathers of the succeeding Church after the apostles instituted certain inferior degrees of ministry, yet in the New Testament there is no mention made of any other degree or distinction in orders, but only of deacons or ministers, and presbyters or bishops, and throughout the whole discourse makes presbyters and bishops one and the same.”¹ “When the Confession of Faith received the sanction of Parliament in 1560,” writes Dr Grub, the Episcopalian author of ‘*The Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*,’ “most of the supporters of the Protestant opinions in the two British kingdoms looked on the communions to which they belonged as portions of the same Reformed Church, holding alike the great doctrines of the Gospel. . . . Several of the English divines would even have preferred the northern establishment to their own. ‘The Scots,’ said Parkhurst, writing to Bullinger in August 1560, ‘have made greater progress in true religion in a few months than we have done in many years. Those who do not go so far still heartily rejoiced in the Presbytery of the Scottish Reformation.’ Alluding to Scotland in a letter to the same Swiss minister, dated February 1562, Bishop Jewel says, ‘Religion is most favourably received, firmly maintained, and daily making progress in that country.’”² The rebound, of which Hooker and Andrews were the leaders, was largely a reaction against the narrow-

¹ *Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici*, Appendix, p. 128.

² Grub’s *History*, vol. ii. pp. 252, 253.

ness of the Puritans, and the attempt to make Calvinism an article of union between the two Churches; and it sought in the historic Church of the first four or five centuries, and in the early creeds and liturgies, the basis on which the reformed Church of England was to be built. It eschewed enforcing too much of symmetry and logical completeness, and preferred as far as possible the preservation of the ancient usages rather than the construction of a completely reformed system which might be in closer harmony with the theological views that the learning and earnestness of the Reformers abroad had established on strong foundations. It was throughout a compromise,—a wise compromise perhaps, when regarded in the light of subsequent history, and yet a confusing compromise, as the many controversies of subsequent years have shown. It had also another differentiating note. The civil power, especially as expressed by the personal will and authority of the reigning sovereign, be it Edward or Elizabeth or the Stewart monarchs, was recognised as having a supremacy which was never tolerated in Scotland.

The Reformation in Scotland, on the other hand, was more closely associated with the acceptance of definite theological beliefs. Although the first Confession prepared by John Knox and others was a freer and less dogmatic symbol than the subsequent Confession of the Westminster Divines, yet the reformed theology, especially as it found expression in the strongly built system of John Calvin, was an undoubted power in moulding the

ecclesiastical and religious life of the Scottish people. The movement was also far more a popular movement than in England. It was not the civil power—although it was ever in view as a power ordained by God—which dominated the Church, for to the honour of the Scottish Church it can be said that from the first her liberty as a divine institute amenable to Christ alone, and claiming separate jurisdiction from that of the State, has been characteristic of our ecclesiastical history, while the part played by the episcopate established by James and Charles is frequently in marked contrast. The sycophancy of the one does not compare favourably with the independence of the other, and with the unbending perseverance with which the rights of the Church were maintained. The movement was national. Parliament reflected the convictions of the people, and although rapacious barons plotted against the Church for their own enrichment, yet it was not the sovereign or Parliament, but the nation—led by its laity, peer and peasant, religiously convinced, and inspired by the preaching of the ministry—which accepted and enforced the Reformation.

Nothing can be further from the truth than the notions which often pass as true pictures of the emergence of our historic Church, and which find characteristic expression in the phrases already quoted from Bishop Gore and Dr Moberly, and from the writer in the 'Church Quarterly,' and which are too often allowed to pass unchallenged. We quote Bishop Gore as giving a clear and frank

statement of this view: "It will appear at once, as a consequence of all those arguments, that the various Presbyterian and Congregationalist organisations, however venerable on many and different grounds, have, in dispensing with Episcopal successions, violated a fundamental law of the Church's life. It cannot be maintained that the acts of ordination by which presbyters of the sixteenth or subsequent centuries originated the ministry of some of these societies were covered by their commissions, or belonged to the office of presbyter which they had duly received. Beyond all question they 'took to themselves' these powers of ordination, and consequently had them not. . It is not proved—it is not even probable—that any presbyter had in any age the power to ordain. But it is absolutely certain that for a large number of centuries it had been understood beyond all question that only bishops could ordain, and that presbyters had not episcopal powers; and no exceptional dignity, belonging to any presbyter-abbot, had ever enabled him to transcend the limits of his office. It follows, then, not that God's grace has not worked, and worked largely, through many an irregular ministry where it was exercised or used in good faith, but that a ministry not episcopally received is invalid—that is to say, falls outside the conditions of covenanted security, and cannot justify its existence in terms of the covenant." ¹

This paragraph bristles with assertions which

¹ Church and Ministry, pp. 344, 345.

challenge discussion. We have already sought in vain for such a divine covenant as is here described establishing the episcopate as the only ministry through which valid ordination can be given in the Church. Where is there a hint of a divine covenant giving security only to sacraments that are celebrated by those who are episcopally ordained, or indeed by any other exclusive order of ministry? Is it to be found in the New Testament? There are there Christ's promises to His Church and His commission to His apostles, but, as we have already seen, there is not one word which, by fair inference, can be held to justify such a claim as we have described. Is it to be found in sub-apostolic literature? We have shown that, as a whole, the evidence points in another direction than the episcopate universally received as a separate order above the presbyterate. In contradiction to his own acknowledgment of the primitive identification of presbyter and bishop, and absolutely forgetting the clear statements of Jerome, Bishop Gore says here that it is "not proved—that it is not even probable—that any presbyter had in any age power to ordain." If he means any single presbyter, we would perhaps accept his dictum; but that presbyters had the power to ordain has been, we think, sufficiently proved, and is acknowledged by most eminent scholars of his own and other Churches. Again, that "for a large number of centuries it had been understood that beyond all question only bishops could ordain," does not affect the question as to

the primitive and apostolic usages. A similar argument might equally prove the supremacy of the Pope, which undoubtedly was acknowledged for a large number of centuries. It is difficult to determine whether the classifying of Presbyterians and Congregationalists together shows Bishop Gore's actual ignorance of the tenets and history of our Church, or is a piece of carelessness or cynical indifference regarding a question to which his brother Bishop of Salisbury attaches no little importance, as bearing on the larger matter of the union of the divided Churches. But it is not by curtly dismissing the Church of Scotland that Bishop Gore is likely to aid a more Christian understanding between the historic Churches of our country.¹

¹ It is curious to read Bishop Gore's classification of Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the light of the Acts of the General Assembly, quoted on p. 182. We would also refer to the following from Dr Sprott's 'Worship and Ministry of the Church of Scotland,' p. 192: "It is of more importance to notice—what was certainly considered of far greater moment by the compilers of our standards—the question as to the right or power of the laity to ordain Church officers. Does the principle '*non det qui non habet*' hold here as in other things? This subject was thoroughly discussed by the Westminster Divines and Scottish Commissioners, and there are no stronger statements to be found anywhere than in their writings—such, for example, as the '*Jus Divinum Ministerii Evangelici*' on the necessity of a succession in the ministry. The fundamental difference betwixt them and the Independents was, that they considered all church power to be vested in the office-bearers, not in the body of the Church. Further, they held that our Lord's promises were a pledge that the ministry could never fail; that ordination makes the minister, as baptism makes the member of the Church; that, notwithstanding the corruption of Rome, her ordination was no less valid than her baptism, and that if this were not so, the continuity of the visible Church would be de-

But we come to the real essence of the statement when we read, "It cannot be maintained that the acts by which presbyters of the sixteenth or subsequent centuries originated the ministries of some of these societies were covered by their commissions, or belonged to the office of presbyter which they duly received." Beyond all question they "took to themselves" these powers of ordination, and consequently "had them not."

The position of such presbyters was very different from the picture here presented. The Reformers held, and held rightly, that in the primitive and sub-apostolic Churches, and to a later date in certain places, presbyters did possess the power to ordain, and formed, along with the deacons, the only permanent order of ministry. We need not recur to the proof already exhibited of this view being correct. The Church of Scotland did not condemn ordination by bishops, but held that it was essentially in virtue of their order as presbyters that they became ordaining bishops, and that if

stroyed. . . . Even in their testimonials of orders, they were careful to state the doctrine of succession. Take the following as an example : 'Forasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ . . . has judged it meet that there should be a succession of pastors and teachers in His Church even unto the end of the world, . . . and hath deputed the care of the continuation of this ministerial office unto such as have been already called thereunto, requiring them to commit the things they have received unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also : We, the ministers of Christ . . . in the city of York, . . . have upon the 23rd day of June 1654 proceeded solemnly to set . . . M. N. apart unto the office of a Presbyter and work of the ministry by laying on our hands, with fasting and prayer : By the virtue whereof we do esteem and declare him a lawful minister of Christ, and hereby recommend him,' &c. Quoted from Calamy's 'Life of Baxter,' p. 454.

the original presbyter-bishop was elevated into the presidency of the local presbyters, and if the act of ordination became transferred from the presbyter or from the charismatic ministry to a single presbyter-bishop, it was not because of a new order having been instituted. No such elevation could supersede the original powers inherent in the presbyter-bishop, for, to quote once more Bishop Lightfoot's conclusion, "it was not from the apostolic office by localisation but from the presbyterate by elevation" that mono-episcopacy arose. The Reformers also held that, in virtue of the same fact, the succession through presbyters might be secured by succession through bishops, not because they were bishops but presbyters; in short, that it was not through bishops as a separate order, which the episcopate never was, but through bishops as being presbyters or priests, that the true succession and the authority came down. As Reformers they went back to the primitive and apostolic Church, and reaffirmed the character of their office, and claimed for it its primitive position. Being themselves presbyters, by far the larger number—probably all—of them episcopally ordained, or ordained by those who had derived their orders through those who were originally so ordained, and therefore even according to episcopal requirements undoubted presbyters, they certainly did *not* "take to themselves" those powers of ordination which were already inherent in their office. They did not require to do so. But Bishop Gore also objects that such acts were not covered "by their commission."

What commission? If he means apostolic commission to presbyters to ordain, he begs the question, as has been amply shown, unless he can prove that the presbyters of the Scottish Church were ordained by those who were not themselves presbyters, which is certainly not historically true. But if he means a commission to ordain from the Roman Church, from which so many of them had received their orders, we may reply that the absence of a similar commission is equally wanting for the bishops of the Anglican communion, who "took upon themselves" to reform that Roman Church in which they also had received their episcopal orders, just as the presbyters who similarly reformed the Scottish Church had originally received their orders. What commission did the reformed Anglican bishops receive beyond what their office inherently conveyed, and what the voice of the nation and the Word of God confirmed? So was it in Scotland.

The description which Dean Church gives of the English Reformation can, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied with equal force to the Scottish Reformation: "The ancient Church and its reformation had taken up its ground on the Scriptures and the primitive Church. It had avowed its object to be a return, as far as it was possible, to what the teaching of the apostles and their disciples had made the primitive Church to be. At the outset all that was much insisted upon was that the primitive Church was certainly *not* like the modern unreformed Latin Church." So was it in Scotland.

The corruption of the unreformed Latin Church was burned into the consciences of the people, who had become enlightened in the Word of God, and who felt that His truth must be vindicated and His Church cleansed from the evils and the immoralities and false doctrines which had defaced it. They did not regard themselves as schismatics but reformers, for their views as to the sin of schism were of a strength which ought to astonish those who, claiming the heritage of the Reformers, have torn the Church of the Reformers into scandalous divisions and warring sects.

We have, however, to remark that the distinction between the question of authority and order and that of covenanted sacramental grace dependent on the action of a special ministry, relates to another matter regarded as vitally important by the Reformers. Priestly and prophetic offices were emphatically distinguished. The Reformers denied priesthood in the special sense in which the name was used by those Churches which regarded the Eucharist as a renewal of the sacrifice of the cross, as being propitiatory, and to be offered for the sins of the living and the dead. Christ, according to the Reformers, is the one abiding priest for ever, and His sacrifice was offered "once for all"; and they held that there is no priesthood now on earth except what is common to all believers who have been made "priests unto God," not to offer any propitiatory sacrifice, but the spiritual sacrifices described in the New Testament. The ministry is a priesthood only in a representative capacity,

appointed for the due ordering of worship and administering the sacraments. But the prophetic office remains in its full force; for the preaching of the Gospel in order to the convincing, converting, and building up of souls, is emphatically the work of the ministry. It is the ministry of reconciliation; not to reconcile God to man, which is the sacerdotal view, but to declare to man that God is already reconciled, and, as ambassadors for Christ, to beseech them to be reconciled to God. The conception of succession will therefore be differently regarded according to the view held as to the nature of the ministry. The priestly conception, as described above, will bring with it the ancient Judaic idea of authority to offer sacrifice and obtain the covenanted grace dependent thereon. The prophetic conception will suggest rather authority founded on ascertained fitness to declare the Word of life, and to secure the due and orderly administration of the sacrament. Whatever priestly and sacramental functions are involved in office will therefore be chiefly of a representative character, and ministerial order will be, accordingly, in harmony with that purpose—viz., authority duly exercised empowering and appointing those who are to govern in the Church, who are to preach and teach, and to celebrate the sacraments. It is evident that succession, when related to a priesthood in the Judaic sense, may assume a purely mechanical character, but succession when related to the ministry of the New Testament requires to be vitally connected with the main-

tenance and promulgation of truth. A mechanical succession may maintain a line of priesthood, but it cannot of itself necessarily secure a ministry so instructed and so inspired as to be verily that of "ambassadors for Christ." True succession must therefore have relation to the truth and word of Christ. This, as we have seen, was the view which Irenæus urged for succession; it is the plea on which Calvin defends it,¹ and without which he regarded it as mechanical: it is this which finds expression in the phrase "preaching presbyter" in our own standards; and one of the aims of Church order ought to be the securing of its continuance and the due administration of the worship and ordinances and discipline of the Church of God.²

¹ Inst., iv. 2. 2.

² Presbyterians have laid the greatest emphasis on the due authority of the ministry, and the due ordination of such as are to preach and to celebrate the sacraments. After showing the necessity for a valid commission for the lawful exercise of the office of a civil magistrate or of a deacon, we read as follows in the 'Jus Divinum' (Part I., pp. 86, 87): "That no man may do the work of a deacon in the ecclesiastical state, unless called to the office, is evident from Acts vi., where men full of the Holy Ghost and faith, chosen by the people to that work, yet might not minister till they were appointed by the apostles; and that general rule laid down, 1 Tim. iii. 10, 'Let him be first proved, so let him minister.' Now the reason of the connection is evident, for by how much the work of the ministry is of greater consequence, difficulty, and danger, by so much greater care and circumspection is to be taken that it be not performed promiscuously to *quicumque vult*, but performed by such men as are triedly sound in the faith, and able to teach others also. . . . Shall an exact scrutiny be passed upon such as are to feed the bodies of poor men, and not upon such as feed the souls? The work of the ministry, the preaching of the Word, is a work of the highest consequence and importance that ever God committed to the sons of men—the reconciling of men to God; even a heavenly embassy of infinite and eternal consequence. Now, if

We have purposely given voice to the objections which naturally occur as to apostolic succession; but we imagine that what is more required at the present time in Scotland is the reassertion of the source of ministerial authority, and the possession of a true succession in the presbyterate of the Church to which we belong. The term "apostolic succession" has associations which rather repel the minds of our people. It has been the watch-word of the intolerance displayed by episcopalians, immensely intensified since the Tractarian movement, against our own and all other non-episcopal Churches. People imagine that to claim apostolic succession for our presbyters must somehow lead to the overthrow of our Protestantism, and tend to that form of Ritualism against which we have continually protested. But fuller reflection may convince even the most extreme defender of our later traditions that, instead of being a danger, the assertion of the historical validity of our pres-

God allow not these works which are of an inferior nature to be done by men untried and unappointed to the office, how shall He approve of such as adventure upon this work of preaching the Word, which is the work of works, without any trial or commission?" Then as to the administration of the sacraments: "*They are seals of the righteousness by faith.* If it be an intolerable usurpation amongst men for a private man to take the broad seal of the kingdom, and put it to what instruments he pleaseth, much more intolerable is it for a private man to usurp the dispensing of the broad seal of the kingdom of heaven. As in all States there are keepers of the seals appointed, whose office it is to dispose them according to law: even so it is in the Church of God. Jesus Christ hath appointed keepers of His seals, those whom He calls 'stewards of the mysteries of God,' to whom He hath committed the work of reconciliation, and to whom He hath given power to baptise and to administer the Lord's Supper."

byterate, and the undoubted character of the succession through presbyters,—as continually proclaimed during the most vigorous period of our history, and by the best scholars of which our Church could then boast,—is at once a vindication of our position and a safeguard against the attacks of one-sided clerical assumptions. On the other hand, we must guard against becoming ourselves guilty of the intolerance we condemn in others, by assuming towards Christians, who may be neither Episcopalian nor Presbyterian, a position of lofty superiority similar to that which we have had too much reason to resent when shown towards ourselves. The fact of succession and the use we make of it are widely different matters.

As a question of ministerial order and authority we have to remark that it may be difficult to find a middle position between holding the authority which comes from ministerial succession and the acceptance of Congregationalism. Congregationalism may be described as the power of a Christian society voluntarily formed, consisting of two or three or many believers, themselves laymen, selecting one or more of their own members, and ordaining such to be their minister, to dispense the sacraments, and to act as pastor and teacher. Because of this action there is jurisdiction and government exercised, but only within and over that particular congregation or society which has thus appointed and ordained its own ministry. The right to do this is based on the continuity of the life of the Church because of the indwelling Spirit of God; and the

authority becomes thus that of the particular congregation or ecclesia which, in virtue of its divine life, claims inherent power so to act. The continuity in this case is continuity in the life of the Church.

We are not going to discuss Congregationalism, but would simply draw attention to the fact that, whether it is right or wrong, lawful or unlawful, this system was consistently condemned by the Reformers and consistently rejected by the Church of Scotland. The Church by its Acts of Assembly condemned in the strongest manner the "Sectaries," meaning the Independents, who in Cromwell's time were acquiring influence in Scotland as well as in England. It is enough to refer to the Act passed in the Assembly of 1647, reported in Dr Cunningham's 'History of the Church in Scotland' (vol. ii. p. 156): "Afraid lest the gangrene [as it was sometimes called] should spread northward, an Act was passed prohibiting all books until the pestilent heresies of Independents were maintained [*sic*] from entering the country."

On the other hand, the Church condemned any one taking the office of the ministry "without a lawful calling"; and it is the "preaching presbyters" to whom, according to our standards, "it doth belong to ordain." It lies with them to try and to judge the qualifications of every candidate, and it ordinarily falls to the presbytery after such trials to ordain.

We have but to combine these two statements—the condemnation of laymen appointing and

ordaining their ministers, and the emphasis laid on a "lawful calling"—to see that another ground of authority than that of a voluntary and self-made association assuming the name of Church, and "taking to itself" the functions of ordination, must be found; and that ground was taken by our Reformers, who held that this authority comes through an unbroken succession of presbyters, coincident for a time with succession in the episcopate, because, according to their reading of the history of the primitive Church and the teaching of the Fathers, bishops originally bestowed ordination not as a separate order, but because they were presbyters to whose office the right inherently belonged. Accordingly, when we address the members of our own Church we must recall the grounds on which our ministry rests. It must either rest on a basis essentially common to Congregationalism, or it is a lawful ministry because no one has "taken it to himself," but has been judged and ordained by those to whom the function "doth belong"—that is, those who have due authority.

What was required, therefore, was to discover the source of authority, and by the very terms of the case it was necessary to look to the historic line of the presbyterate. And this was just what our reforming fathers did.

1. They denied that they had been guilty of schism when they reformed the existing Church. When they had purified it from its errors it was the same Church. "When the Protestant Churches did separate they did not erect a new

Church, but reformed a corrupt Church.”¹ They asserted they had never left the Church, but, to use a common phrase at that time (probably suggested by Luther’s treatise on “The Babylonish Captivity of the Church”), only abandoned “the Babylon” which had enslaved the Church. The words of Calvin are strong as to the sin of schism, and as to the continuity of the ministry, and of the sacraments and creeds through the Roman Church, although the ministry and sacraments had been doctrinally or otherwise misrepresented.² It would be easy to multiply instances of the condemnation of schism from the works of the Reformers, but as our interests are chiefly in regard to what our own Reformers and Presbyterian fathers teach, we would refer to the authorities quoted by Dr Sprott in his work on ‘The Doctrine of Schism in the Church of Scotland.’

2. As a corollary from these statements regarding schism, we turn to direct claims urged by our Reformers as to the preservation of an apostolic ministry by succession through presbyters. Not only was the idea of forming a new Church distant from their minds, but the continuity of the Church and of the ministry was strongly asserted. We need not revert to the arguments already urged as to the office of the presbyter in the primitive Church, with powers which it was not within the due function of the episcopate to abolish: we rather proceed to show that it was with full conscious-

¹ *Jus Divinum*, Part II. p. 41 (A.D. 1654).

² Calvin’s *Inst.*, 4. 3. 11, 12.

ness of the original nature of the presbyterate that our Reformers went to that office as apostolically authoritative. They, in common with the Reformed Churches on the Continent, held that Christ and His apostles instituted only two permanent orders in the Church, that of the presbyter-bishop (the terms being identical) and the deacon. The learned work entitled the '*Jus Divinum Evangelici Ministerii*' (drawn up by sundry ministers within the city of London, 2nd edition, 1647), which may be taken as representing the views of our forefathers at that time, dwells at length on the vindication from Scripture and the early Fathers of the primary position of the presbyterate.¹ This position was firmly maintained throughout the history of the Church. Nor was the theory of succession less clearly held. The objections then urged were not against the principle of succession, but as to the validity or worthiness of orders which came through the episcopate, and especially through what was termed, after the custom of the period, the Roman antichrist. The fundamental position was that "power of ordination exercised for many hundred years by bishops did belong to them as presbyters, not as bishops. . . . A bishop being nothing less [more?] in the opinion of antiquity but a chief presbyter or president of the presbytery, and of the same rank with them, thus all the acts he doth he must do by virtue of his presbyterial consecration." Again, to the objection, "But the ministers whose ordination you defend were made

¹ See *passim*, and especially Part II., 1654, p. 18, and following.

by bishops who held themselves to be a superior order of ministry above presbyters by divine institution," it is replied: "Whether they did so or not, we know not, but sure we are that the bishops of King Edward and Queen Elizabeth's day were not of this opinion, as we have shown.¹ That the laws of the realm do not countenance it, that the learnedest of the Papists are against it, and if any of the bishops of late years were of this opinion, it was their personal error, and not at all essential to the episcopal office." The objection arising from succession through Rome is repelled, not without quaint and contemptuous illustrations—*e.g.*, "For as a maimed man may beget a perfect child, because he begets him not as maimed but as a man, so an antichristian bishop may ordain a true minister, because he ordains him not as an antichristian but as a presbyter, that by divine warrant hath authority so to do. . . . We must carefully distinguish the acts of office (which have their form and being from a root and foundation without us) from the qualities of the man that performs the office. The man may be naught, yet his office is good; and acts done by virtue of his office just and allowable, although the man and his religion be naught. As, for instance, a Popish landlord makes you a lease of his farm, your lease is not antichristian, but good in law, though he that demised it be for his religion a Papist. So in this case ordination is an act of office received from Christ, and is not antichristian though executed

¹ See additional Note III., p. 190.

by one that is in other things antichristian. We do not rebaptise them that were baptised by Popish priests, because the power of Christ's ordinances depends not on the person that does execute the same, but on a higher foundation, the institution of Christ."¹

The position here sustained rests on a belief on the succession of the ministry from the primitive Church, and that belief throws light on what the Reformers meant by those who are described in the form of Church government as presbyters "to whom the right doth belong" to ordain. And accordingly we meet the Episcopal claims to exclusive authority by the Presbyterian claim, that if they have a valid succession so have we.²

But assertion is not proof; yet we do not intend here to exhibit that proof in detail, because this has already been done at various times by more than one of our presbyters,³ and especially because in this we have been already anticipated by a previous Baird lecturer. The Very Reverend Principal Story in 1897 gave from this place such a full review of the evidence for the continuity of the ministry in the Scottish Church as to render any further

¹ Jus Div., Part II. pp. 28, 29. See additional Note IV., p. 193.

² For further illustrations, see Dr Sprott's 'Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland.'

³ See the 'Christian Instructor' for 1839, in which a series of papers appeared by an anonymous writer, characterised by much learning and full of abounding vigour in meeting assailants. In more recent times the various treatises by Dr Leishman and Dr Sprott of North Berwick are, among others, replete with accurate information, the result of long and special study.

treatment here superfluous.¹ The links whereby the succession through the presbyterate leads back to the primitive apostolic institution are there clearly set forth.

To sum up the positions in which the Anglican and Scottish Churches mutually stand. The resemblance between the Anglican Church and the Church of Scotland lies in the fact that both contemplated the reformation of the then existing National Church, and not the establishment of a new one; both held the necessity for a ministry duly authorised; both held the principle of succession as that which ordinarily gave authority;² and both used the ancient rite of ordination by imposition of hands. But they differed essentially as to the merits of the historic ministry which each adopted. The Anglican Church went back to the period when the episcopate had emerged as distinct from the presbyterate and occupied a primacy over it, at the most exercising this position of eminence in relation only to single communities or congregations, with nothing of the nature of a diocesan jurisdiction. The Scottish Church, on the other hand, went further back, and claimed its primitive position for the office of the presbyterate as found at an earlier period than that in which

¹ 'The Apostolic Ministry in the Scottish Church.' Baird Lecture for 1897.

² We use the word "ordinarily" in view of the speculation not uncommon at that time as to circumstances—such as Christians wrecked on a desert island—when it might be lawful to appoint one of their number to administer the sacraments. The discussion was one which enlisted archbishops as well as presbyters.

the episcopate appears as distinct,—found, too, in Churches unmistakably apostolic, and continuing in the Churches of the West till about the middle of the second century, and very much later elsewhere, as in Alexandria. If the Anglican Church was entitled to revert to the time when the bishop became elevated into the presidency or primacy over the presbyterate, to which order he originally belonged, the Scottish Church—influenced, perhaps, by its historic connection with what was to a great extent a Presbyterian type of Church order in the Celtic Church, through which it received Christianity—was equally, or rather still more, entitled to recognise the succession which was first established, and stamped, if any succession was stamped, with apostolic authority in the period immediately following that of the apostles. For it was the presbyterate, not the episcopate, which traditionally formed the very backbone, as it were, of the ministry, and is still acknowledged as such in the Latin Church, the episcopate being regarded not as a higher order, but a dignity, to which certain duties and privileges had become attached:¹ “Episcopatus non est ordo, sed sacerdotii culmen et apex atque Tronus dignitatis.”²

¹ See Council of Trent, sess. xxiii. c. 2, Catec. ii. 7. 25, 27.

² Fifteenth-century Pontifical in the Library of St Geneviève of Paris.

NOTE III.

IT is a common mistake of Anglican writers to fail to distinguish certain periods in the history of the Church of Scotland. They fix, for example, on the fact that in 1560, through John Knox's influence, the imposition of hands was for a very few years given up. Although nearly all the ministers at that time had been priests, and had therefore the order of presbyter, entitling them, as we have seen, to ordain, yet Knox held that, as the visible effects and miraculous powers connected with that rite in the days of the apostles had ceased, the mere form was now of slight consequence; yet it was only for less than twelve years that the rite was omitted. It is also a common mistake to identify the period of John Knox with the characteristic beliefs of Presbyterians who date rather from Melville and the Westminster Divines than from Knox. Even Calvin, whom Knox esteemed as his master, would not have accepted all that Knox propounded. Still further, any irregularities which may have occurred during the early years of confusion do not invalidate the succession of our existing presbyters through bishops and presbyters as to whose ordination no Anglican can entertain a doubt. Irregularities took place at that time in England also, and in connection with no order more frequently than that of the episcopate in Scotland, the majority of the bishops being, according to the usual theory of validity, not bishops at all.

In connection with this subject the following extracts from Dr Sprott's 'Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland' may be read with interest:—

"As to the *doctrine* of Ordination, the leading principles of the Westminster Standards are the two following: 1. No man ought to take upon him the office of a Minister of the Gospel until he be lawfully called and ordained thereto

by those who, having been set apart themselves to the work of the ministry, have power to set apart others. 2. Every Minister of the Word is to be ordained by imposition of hands, with prayer and fasting. . . .

“It is the doctrine of the Church that Presbyters are the successors of the Apostles in all the ordinary functions of the ministry, and this excludes the claim of Prelates to ordain as an order above Presbyters, leaving them only the same power of order as that which belongs to all who are admitted to the Presbyterate. All the Reformed Churches hold that there are only two orders in the ministry, of divine appointment—those of Bishop or Presbyter, and Deacon. . . . Episcopacy is, in short, according to this view, but a phase of Presbytery; and there never has been, nor can be, any ordination to the ministry except by Presbyters, call them what you will. One reason why these views were so prevalent at the Reformation was, that they had been generally accepted in the Church before. Popes and Reforming Councils had alike committed themselves to the position that a Bishop is by order no more than a Presbyter, and that his pre-eminence is merely of ecclesiastical, not of divine right. This question was purposely kept open by the Council of Trent, and the old view is still common in the Roman Catholic Church. In England, Bishops took part in the Reformation, which was not, to any great extent, the case elsewhere, but the English Church was at that time of the same mind on this subject as the rest of the Reformed. . . . The English Ordinal contained nothing to distinguish the order of Bishop from that of Presbyter between the Reformation and the time of Charles II., when it was amended; so that, as has been said, if the former is a superior order, Protestant Episcopacy was a hundred years too late in introducing it. . . . From the Reformation till the passing of the Act of Uniformity there were ‘scores, if not hundreds,’ of Clergymen in the Church of England who had no ordination except what they had received from Scottish Presbyters, or from the Reformed Churches on the Continent. In Scotland, though several Bishops became

Ministers in the Reformed Church, the Reformation had been mainly achieved by Presbyters, and the sympathy of our forefathers with the Continental Reformed Churches disposed them to favour the model of Church Government which they had adopted. . . . The survival of some of the elements of the old Celtic Church had also a tendency in the direction of Presbytery. In the early Scottish and Irish Churches, the primitive and apostolic practice of consecrating all Presbyters Bishops seems to have prevailed longer than elsewhere, and when a distinction between these offices was introduced, the Bishops had no jurisdiction, but held a very subordinate place under the Presbyter-Abbot of the Celtic Monastery. There were no Parishes nor Diocesan Bishops in Scotland in the days of the Columban Church. The hierarchy was of only a few centuries' standing at the time of the Reformation,—the Archbishopric of St Andrews itself only dating from the previous century, so that it had not the same prestige as in other countries. . . .

"Our divines in the seventeenth century would not have taken up the position they did, as to a succession in the ministry, if they had not been perfectly certain as to the ground on which they themselves stood. No one questioned the fact of their having such a succession at that time, and their main controversy was with the Sectaries, who condemned their ministry, not because it had not, but because it had, been derived through the Church of Rome. It was not at Episcopalians, but at the Presbyterians, then dominant in England, that Cromwell was hitting when, in 1653, he wrote thus: 'I speak not—I thank God it is far from my heart—for a ministry deriving itself from the Papacy, and pretending to that *which is so much insisted on—succession*. The true succession is through the Spirit.' In Scotland . . . after the Reformation . . . *nearly all the old Clergy became Reformed* as soon as they saw that a change was inevitable. . . .

"In 1612 Episcopal ordination was introduced from England. Spottiswoode and others were consecrated

Bishops at Lambeth without reordination, the validity of their previous orders being recognised. From that time till 1638 all who were admitted to the ministry were ordained by Bishops of the Spottiswoode line, *with the assistance of other Presbyters*, as is still the case in the English Church. . . . In 1661, when the State restored Episcopacy, a new bevy of Clergy were despatched to England and consecrated Bishops, and some of them were not only consecrated but reordained, because of the Act of Uniformity, which for the first time made this necessary. On returning to Scotland they did not reordain others who were raised to the Episcopate, nor the Clergy who during the previous twenty-three years had been ordained by Presbyteries, and who remained on in their parishes, as the great majority did. After the Revolution, when a section separated and formed the Scottish Episcopal Communion, two of the three Bishops who carried on the succession were of this number, and several of the first Clergy who adhered to them had no other than Presbyterian ordination. Indeed, both parties at that time generally held the old Reformed view—that, whether Episcopacy or Presbytery might be preferable, they were only different ways of marshalling officers of the same order. Hence it was that, in 1692, 180 Ministers, in the name of the whole Episcopal Clergy of the North, which was their stronghold, addressed the Assembly, asking admission into the Presbyterian Establishment.”—‘Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland,’ Lecture V., *sub voce* “Ordination.”

NOTE IV.

WE are permitted to give the following extract from a paper read by request to a Society of Episcopalian Clergymen in Edinburgh by the Rev. Dr Sprott:—

“Regarding the distinction between presbyter and bishop,

there are differences of opinion as to the declarations of the Church of England on this subject, but the question is practically an open one. Till the death of Henry VIII. in 1547 there was almost no change in the doctrine, worship, or government of the Church, except the substitution of the supremacy of the king for that of the pope. In 1537 a book called 'The Institution of a Christian Man' received the sanction of Convocation. In treating of what it calls 'the sacrament of orders' it says: 'This office, this power and authority' (viz., of the ministry), 'was communicated and given by Christ and His apostles unto certain persons only—that is to say, unto priests or bishops, whom they did elect, call, and admit thereto by their prayers and imposition of hands.' 'In the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only of deacons or ministers, and of priests or bishops.' The same thing is repeated with slight changes in the King's Book of 1540: 'Of these two orders only, priests and deacons, Scripture maketh express mention, and how they were conferred of the apostles by prayer and the imposition of their hands, and to these two the primitive Church did add and join certain other inferior and lower degrees, as of sub-deacons, &c.' After Edward's accession the House of Lords, in January 1550, approved beforehand a new ordinal, to be drawn up by six bishops and six divines to be appointed by the king, which ordinal was to be set forth under the great seal before the 1st of April following. Cranmer had the chief hand in it, and it was made obligatory without having been submitted to Convocation. The preface states that 'it is evident now unto all men diligently reading the Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church, bishops, priests, and deacons.' In the ordinal itself, to use Blunt's words, 'the distinction of the order of bishops from that of priests was definitely asserted for the first time in 1661,' when what he calls 'the Great Revision' took place. Looking to Cranmer's opinion and that of the reforming section of the English Church in

1550, and also to the fact that the statement in the preface was expected to be admitted by all intelligent people, Presbyterians included, it is not probable that the word 'order' was used in a strict sense. A document found among the Hatfield papers has recently been published by the Historical Commission, which sheds some fresh light on this matter. This is a letter, of date November 4, 1588, from Dr Hammond to Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's great secretary, who took a deep interest in ecclesiastical affairs. It is evident that the secretary had asked Dr Hammond to state the grounds on which 'superiority of ministers rests.' In reply Dr Hammond argues at length that the superiority of bishops over presbyters has no foundation in Scripture, and then maintains that it is lawful for a sovereign to commit to a minister of the Word and sacraments superiority over many churches and pastors. His letter concludes thus: 'The bishops of our realm do not (so far as I ever yet heard), nor may, claim to themselves any other authority than is given them by the statute of the 25th of King Henry VIII., recited in the first year of her majesty's reign, or by other statutes of the land, neither is it reasonable they should make any other claim, for, if it had pleased her majesty, with the wisdom of the realm, to have used no bishops at all, we could not have complained justly of any defect in our Church, or if it had liked them to diminish the authority of bishops to shorter terms, they might not have said they had any wrong. But since it hath pleased her majesty to use the ministry of bishops and to assign them their authority, it must be to me, that am a subject, as God's ordinance, and therefore to be obeyed according to St Paul's rule.' Archbishop Whitgift must have been familiar with this document, and have agreed with it, for we find him writing thus: 'If it had pleased her majesty, with the wisdom of the realm, to have used no bishops at all, we could not have complained of any defect in our Church.' By common consent Bancroft was the first to take high ground for the episcopate in a sermon preached at St Paul's Cross in January 1588-89. His contention, so

far as I remember, was not that the episcopate was a distinct order by divine right, but it was of divine right that some presbyters should be placed in authority over others. There is a wide difference between these two positions, but, whatever Bancroft's real opinion, his sermon raised a great storm of opposition. Since his time there have been many advocates of the higher view of the episcopal office, and as many opponents of that view, so that the question is at least an open one. A recently published statement as to the necessity of Episcopacy is to be found in 'The Rudiments of Theology,' 1878, by Canon Norris, who is, I believe, a moderate High Churchman. 'We may venture,' he says, 'to interpret the mind of our Church in respect of non-episcopal Churches thus: as to those that have abandoned Episcopacy, but have retained the presbyteral succession, all that we affirm is that they have lost a very important safeguard, but our definitions do not exclude them from the Catholic Church. As to those who have abandoned not only Episcopacy, but the presbyteral succession also, we say that they are new societies, Christian, it may be, but certainly not branches of the old historic Church of the apostles.'¹

"In Scotland, when the Established Church was Episcopal, it was never held that the episcopate was a distinct order, with exclusive power of ordination and jurisdiction. Dr Forbes of Corse, in his 'Irenicum,' traces the origin of bishops as high as the preface to the English Ordinal; but while his fixed opinion was that Episcopacy was lawful and agreeable to the Word of God, and that in Churches governed by the common council of presbyters only there was a defect, he was no less firm in maintaining that the defect was not an essential one, that it did not destroy the nature of a Church, nor take away from it the power of ordination and jurisdiction.

"We may sum up the differences between the two systems thus: Presbyterians hold that there is no order

¹ Rudiments of Theology, by Canon Norris, p. 101. Rivingtons, London, 1878.

in the Church above that of presbyter ; but Scripture and antiquity, and, I may add, experience, warrant the appointment of superintendents with special executive powers. Episcopalians maintain that from the apostles' days bishops have been superior to presbyters, but they leave it an open question whether they form a distinct order by divine right or not."

LECTURE VI.

SACRAMENTS.

THE question of the sacraments has been for centuries the battlefield of theologians: since the Reformation it has divided Churches, and was perhaps never more contested than at the present hour. The cleavage of opinion is wide, and creates lamentable schisms, not only between Churches that are separate from one another, but within Churches that still maintain corporate unity.

Among too large a proportion of Presbyterians the most inadequate views prevail as to the value and importance of the sacraments. These views are in marked contrast to the standards of the Church and to the faith of our forefathers. The Reformers condemned the cold Rationalism which reduces the sacraments to mere signs and badges of Christian profession, almost as much as they condemned the perversion of Scriptural truth in the sacramental doctrines of Romanism.

The word "sacrament" is not found in Scripture, nor in the sub-apostolic period. It originated in the Vulgate, wherein it was used to represent the

Greek word *μυστήριον*. Thus we find that where it is said, "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery," the rendering is "in a sacrament." Again, "Though I know all mysteries" becomes "all sacraments," and so on. In later times the mystery of the Trinity and of the incarnation was rendered by the Latin "sacramentum S. S. Trinitatis" or "Incarnationis."

This translation of the Greek term was unfortunate, because the word "mystery" in the New Testament does not signify a mystery in the modern sense, and as certain Churchmen so often use it in the ordinary sense, of what cannot be understood. In the New Testament, it represents some truth or purpose or institution of God, the meaning of which had *at one time been concealed, but is now made known*, at least to the spiritually minded who are capable of receiving it. Mystery in the New Testament, therefore, usually signifies the very opposite of our ordinary usage. "To you it is given *to know* the mysteries of the kingdom"; "Though *I understand* all mysteries"; "That I may open my mouth boldly *to make known* the mystery of the Gospel." Mystery, accordingly, is something made known and understood, which can be explained to the Church. The use of *sacramentum* to represent mystery arose from the idea of a sacred meaning being involved in some outward sign or action. Thus the touching of the ears of catechumens with spittle or the use of salt, and even the sign of the cross, were sometimes termed sacraments, because they had a spiritual

significance. The term, accordingly, became of wide application. In the Reformed Churches, however, the name "sacraments" came to be restricted to those ordinances of the New Testament which alone bear the authority of express divine institution in the Christian Church. In the Reformed Churches the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are alone recognised, because these only were appointed by Christ; but in the Roman Church there are seven, so that five are sacraments because of ecclesiastical authority, and except we grant the claim of Rome to infallibility, are without divine warrant. The recognition of seven sacraments dates from at least twelve centuries after Christ.

The teaching of the Church of Scotland as to the nature of the sacraments is clear and distinct. The Confession of Faith defines their character both by negative and positive statements:—

"1. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word.

"2. There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other."

Confession p 203
 The definition of a sacrament in the Larger Catechism is in some respects fuller: "A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace the benefits of His mediation"; and it also declares that "the parts of a sacrament are two—the one an outward and sensible sign used according to Christ's own appointment, the other an inward spiritual grace thereby signified." In the Shorter Catechism there is another form of expression that is similarly significant: "A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs Christ and the benefits of His new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers." *in His Church*

The position of the doctrine of the sacraments in the Catechisms is suggestively connected with other means of grace. They are properly declared to be means of grace in common with the Word of God and prayer.

The definitions of our Church are in absolute harmony with those given in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and generally with the other Reformed Confessions.

The meaning of the terms requires explanation. The phrase "sensible signs" refers to the character of the elements used: they are sensible—that is, physical things which appeal to the senses. In other words, they are material, and fitted to represent the spiritual facts they refer to. Thus water is a fitting symbol of cleansing and of the gift of the Holy Ghost; while bread and wine have

been appointed because they set forth how the body of the Lord was broken and His blood shed, and how these are given for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. As signs they plainly signify spiritual realities. They are also termed seals. The word is manifestly suggested by the saying of St Paul: "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of all them that believe." The force of this is evident. The seal attached to any document is the visible mark of authority (1 Kings xxi. 8; Esther iii. 12). Its modern equivalent is very much what we mean by putting the signature to solemn documents—as the seal is still used in some Oriental countries instead of a signature—to give legal effect to their contents. We are familiar with what is meant by "signed, sealed, and delivered." It is in a similar sense that St Paul speaks of his converts being "the seals" of his ministry, for they were the visible evidences "known and read of all men" that God had owned His work. So it is written, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The presence and witness of the Holy Ghost was Christ's visible token of the redemption of believers, provided they did not grieve that Spirit or banish these divine influences.

When applied to the sacraments the term "seal" implies that they are visible testimonies, divinely given, and of the most solemn character, to the fact that the spiritual benefits signified are actually

bestowed. They are not themselves the blessing, but the sign and seal that the spiritual grace they express is actually given by God. They are, as it were, God's visible signature to the promises that are set forth, so that we may know that what He promises outwardly He fulfils effectually. In the sacrament we have thus the signature of God. It is His seal as to His bestowal of spiritual blessing, just as circumcision was the visible testimony of His promise to Abraham.

Further, it is stated in the Larger Catechism that the sacraments "signify and exhibit the benefits of salvation"; and again, in the Shorter Catechism, that these benefits "are represented, sealed, and applied." "Exhibit" at the time of the Reformation bore the sense of "confer" or "apply," so that the two Catechisms are at one in making these testify to *an actual conveyance* of the spiritual benefits they signify. This goes beyond the coldness of the view that they are no more than pictures, badges, and memorials: they are set forth in our standards as means of grace. So is it said in the Confession of Faith in reference to baptism, "The grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost" (chap. xxviii. 6). The sprinkling of the water in baptism testifies the application to the individual of what baptism signifies. The water is not the grace, nor is it, as it were, the pipe or the envelope through which it comes, but it is the sacramental sign that the grace is conferred and applied to that person.

"Whence it comes to pass that the names and

effects of the one are attributed to the other.” The significance of this may be thus stated. There can be no true sacrament without the use of the appointed elements, water being necessary to baptism, and bread and wine to the Eucharist; otherwise they would not be as instituted by the Lord. Yet it is not the elements alone which constitute the sacraments. The spiritual benefits they signify are not secured by anything in the earthly elements. The word of institution used in the celebration, the blessing of Christ, and the working of the Holy Spirit, all combine to make each sacrament really valid—that is, that it shall fulfil the purpose for which it was instituted. There is, accordingly, an evident spiritual relation or sacramental union between the material elements or signs and the spiritual thing signified. It thus comes to pass that “the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other,” and accordingly, when treating of the Lord’s Supper, it is stated in the Confession, “The outward elements in the sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the names of the things they represent—to wit, the body and blood of Christ, although in substance and nature they still remain truly and only bread and wine as they were before.” So is it that when in the words of the institution “the cup” is made the equivalent of the blood of Christ,—“this cup is the new covenant in My blood,” even that which is poured forth for you,—only the grossest literal-

ism would misunderstand the expression. Similarly when St Paul said, "that rock was Christ," or when in Exodus the lamb was called the Passover, we at once perceive the relationship. In like manner the elements are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, such as when the bread is called "the body of Christ" and the wine is called His blood," or when the water in baptism is named the "washing" or "laver of regeneration."

The Church of Rome, while giving in some respects a similar definition of a sacrament, as when it says that a sacrament is a sign, "for it makes known to us by a certain appearance and resemblance that which God by His invisible power accomplishes in our soul," yet differs widely from the reformed doctrine by the assertion of its acting as an *opus operatum*, as when it is said of baptism that the "corporal ablution accomplishes in the soul that which it signifies."¹ The various elements of the ritual combine to make the sacraments effectual *ex opere operato*. The sacraments have, accordingly, in themselves an intrinsic power. It is true that there are certain saving clauses used, such as that there should be no mortal sin forming an obstacle; and it is also held that there must be faith either on the part of the recipient or, in case of infant baptism, on the part of the sponsors or of the Church itself.²

But the relation of sacraments to the life of the Church may be viewed in another light. They stand related to the ascended life of Christ and to His

¹ Cat. Council of Trent, ii. 1, 5.

² Ibid., *sub voce* "Sacraments."

presence in the Church. Their very materialism suggests the abiding activity of the humanity of the incarnate and now glorified Lord. They are physical things appointed for spiritual purposes by Him who was incarnate and is now ascended in our humanity, and they link us in the most vivid manner to His life on earth and to His life glorified. The sensible signs thus acquire special significance. "If man," says Chrysostom, "were not clothed with a material body, these good things—viz., the graces signified—would have been presented naked and unveiled; but, as the soul is united to the body, it was altogether necessary towards understanding them that He should use the aid of sensible things" (Chrys., Hom. 83).

① There are two extremes, practically illustrated although perhaps not dogmatically taught, which find their contradiction in just views of the sacraments. There are those who treat the Church as if it were an entity coming between us and Christ, so that the individual has to look to the Church and depend on it as the priestly system which mediates grace: it is, according to them, the depository from which believers have to look for every supply; they have to put themselves into the hands of the Church. There is an element of truth in this, because the Church, as we have seen, is a divine instrument for setting forth Christ and administering His sacraments; but we allude now to the tendency to stop at the Church as an end. Saving faith directed to the personal Saviour must ever create an immediate and personal relationship to God and Christ.

When the Church is represented as being almost supreme, there is a wrong relationship produced, making the believer dependent on the Church rather than on Christ, and assigning a false independence to the Church in relation to Christ. On the other hand, there is the error found in schools of Evangelicalism, which rest all on the subjective realisation of certain doctrines. More than this is required, even the recognition of the continual presence of the living Christ in His ordinances, witnessed to by the material signs He has instituted. His saving work and His ascended life ought not to be regarded in the abstract as an intellectual or spiritual truth for humanity in general, but also in their concrete force as for the individual, and as assured to him by Christ. It is in this way that the sacraments, being visible and graphic acts,—acts which embody, signify, and apply to the individual in a succinct and comprehensive form what Christ gives to him,—become helpful and important. “Christ,” says Dorner, “left behind permanent institutions which bring us into historic contact with Him, even by sensuous media. His Word, holy Baptism, and the holy Supper proclaim to us this historic connection of the Church of all ages with Him. These three in their impersonal form and manifestation are the means, established and preserved by Him, for bringing us into fellowship with the personally historic and now exalted Lord, and for keeping us therein till He comes again. Rightly used, they do not separate us from Him as false substitutes, such as human persons must be, but draw to His person

while He works through them. Their mediatory working is through no contradiction to the immediacy of the relation between Him and us. They rather mediate the immediacy, not merely of Christ's relation to us, but also of ours to Him. . . . The Church never has faith-creating regenerating power. Never and nowhere does the Holy Spirit withdraw into passivity behind the acting work of the Church. Never and nowhere do the Word and sacraments become His substitutes. They are means for bringing Christ and the individual into vital relationship."¹

Much has been written regarding the relation of the Word and sacraments. The reformers held that the grace that is in the Word and in the sacraments is the same, and that the difference is not to be found in the contents, but in the form in which they severally convey the same grace. The Word appeals to every man's conscience in the sight of God, and proclaims Christ in the fulness of His mediatorial work. Through the knowledge of Christ comes the influence on heart and will which convinces and converts. Nor can there be any true sacrament without the Word. If there was no Word, no intelligent knowledge or apprehension of Christ, the sacraments would be empty forms, mere magical incantations without spiritual benefit. Thus Augustine's rule, "*Accedit verbum ad elementum, fit sacramentum*," applies in another sense than he used it; for it holds true not merely as to the due institution but to the spiritual efficacy of

¹ *Sys. Chris. Doct.*, vol. iv. pp. 153-156.

sacraments, which must depend on some spiritual discernment of what they mean. But the Word and sacraments work in different methods. The preached Word is addressed to all, and its power is in several respects dependent on that of the preacher. It is, however, an appeal to men, as it were *en masse*. On the other hand, the sacrament applies the grace to the individual. Each recipient is separated from the crowd. It is no longer an appeal to many, but it is a vivid action, an action which embodies and expresses the grace which has been preached. That action is, as it were, the deed of Christ, Who through the mediation of visible signs seals to the believing soul the invisible grace signified, and the fact that He does actually confer it. The individual is brought into union with the glorified Lord, Who testifies that the grace which the sacrament signifies is bestowed. The sacraments thus meet us in a form which brings us personally to Christ, Who, through the Holy Ghost, bestows the spiritual benefits. "Their chiefest force and virtue," says Hooker, "is that they are heavenly ceremonies which God hath signified and ordained in His Church, first, as marks whereby we may know *when* God doth impart the vital and saving grace of Christ to all that are capable thereof; and secondly, as means conditional which God requireth in them unto whom He imparteth grace."¹

We must, however, always distinguish between the idea that sacraments have virtue in themselves to produce spiritual effects and the teaching that

¹ Eccles. Polity, v. 57. 3.

their efficacy comes from "the blessing of Christ and the working of God's Spirit in those who by faith receive them." The former partakes of the nature of a charm, and tends to priestcraft and superstition; the other has moral and spiritual power, and that, not from the sacraments *per se*, but from Christ through the instrumentality of His sacraments.¹

¹ "Seeing, therefore, that grace is a consequent of sacraments, a thing which accompanieth them as their end, a benefit which he that hath receiveth from God Himself, the author of sacraments, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them, it may be hereby both understood that sacraments are necessary, and that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural is not in all respects as food to natural life, because they contain *in themselves* no vital force or efficacy, they are not physical but *moral instruments* of salvation, duties of service and worship, which, unless we perform as the Author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable. For all receive not the grace of God who receive the sacraments of His grace. Neither is it *ordinarily* His will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any but by the sacraments; which grace also they that receive by sacraments, receive it from Him and not from them. For of sacraments the very same thing is true which Solomon's wisdom observeth in the brazen serpent, 'He that turned towards it was not saved by the thing he saw, but by Thee, O Saviour of all'" (Hooker's 'Eccles. Polity,' v. 57. 4). So Calvin warns against the error, "When not elevating our minds beyond the visible sign, we transfer to the sacraments the praise of those benefits which are only conferred upon us by Christ alone, and that by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who makes us partakers of Christ Himself, and by the instrumentality of the external signs which invite us to Christ, but which cannot be perverted to any other use without a shameful perversion of all their utility. . . . It is also necessary to guard against being drawn into an error from reading the extravagant language used by the Fathers, with a view to exalt the dignity of the sacraments, lest we should suppose that there is some secret power annexed and attached to the sacraments, so that they communicate the grace of the Holy Spirit just as wine is given in a cup." But he also asserts, "Whatever God promises and adumbrates in signs, He really performs. . . . The only question here is whether God works by a proper and intrinsic power, as it is expressed, or resigns His office to external symbols. 'God alone performs what we obtain by the sacraments, and that by

BAPTISM.

When our Lord commanded His apostles to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

His sacred and, as it is called, intrinsic virtue” (Ins., iv. 14, 16, 17). “It is Christ alone who bestoweth inwardly. He it is alone who makes us partakers of Himself in the Supper” (Augustine, Hom. v. vi. in Joann. Quest. vet. Test. iii. 84).

Much superstition has existed in the Church from comparatively early times as to the virtue that is in the material part of the sacraments to effect spiritual results. While there are phrases which may appear to attribute all to the direct work of God spiritually in the soul, yet, especially in the Oriental Church, the influence of certain Greek beliefs as to nature and materialism is felt, and the ritual both of the Oriental and Roman Church cannot fail sometimes to produce the impression that the sacramental elements become endued with spiritual power. The consecrating of the water of baptism, the marking with the sign of the cross in oil, the chrism, the exorcism, the spittle, all accentuate the idea that material symbols become efficacious in virtue of powers imparted to them. The apostolic Church showed no such tendency, but in Tertullian we have the commencement of the materialistic view, for he declares that “the water of baptism possesses the power of sanctifying the soul after it has been consecrated, by the action of the Holy Spirit.” And Cyril of Jerusalem, in his Lectures on the Mysteries, teaches that “the physical sign carried an inward potency—the oil in exorcism possesses a charm for driving away evil influences, and the chrism in confirmation is made fit to impart the divine nature” (see Allan’s ‘Christian Institute,’ p. 481). The doctrine of the *opus operatum* rests on the belief of a virtue imparted to the material elements wherein spiritual results *ex opere operato* are necessarily produced unless mortal sin prevents. It may be said in reply that, in the “Order of Worship of the Church of Scotland,” the consecration of the elements both in baptism and the Lord’s Supper is expressly ordered. The consecration is there employed in a different sense; it is but the setting apart of the earthly elements to sacred purposes through the use of the words of institution and prayer. Speaking of the elements, the second Helvetic Confession says, “Verbo Dei fiunt, quæ antea non fuerunt, sacramenta. Consecrantur enim Verbo, et sanctificata esse ostenduntur ab eo qui instituit. Et sanctificare vel consecrare est, rem aliquam Deo sacrisque usibus dedicare—h.e., a communi vel profano usu segregare et sacro usui destinare” (cap. xix. 8).

Holy Ghost," He was adopting a custom already familiar to the Jews. Not only did John the Baptist baptize those who accepted His teaching, but the disciples of our Lord during His ministry baptized those who wished to be His followers (John iv. 1, 2). And we have other evidence as to the previous existence of the rite. There is much to show that when a proselyte from the Gentile world was received into Judaism, not only was circumcision insisted on, but baptism also usually took place. This custom may have arisen from the washings which were commonly associated with cleansing from legal defilement. And there is another historical ground for believing that the use of baptism was familiar, for the sect of the Essenes, which was in its vigour in the days of Christ, made much use of immersion as part of their cultus. Accordingly the use of baptism as the visible sign and seal of the washing away of defilement, of the acceptance of a new faith, and of enrolment among the disciples of a religious teacher or prophet, must have been well understood in the days of Christ. This is brought out by the question of the rulers to John the Baptist, "Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?" If he could make good his claims to be a prophet, they would not have objected to his baptizing, for it would have been the natural course to follow. Their difficulty was not baptism—the purpose of which they understood—but the claims of John as one sent of God. Accordingly we may believe that the disciples at

once understood what Christ meant by connecting baptism with the command to make disciples of all nations: it would signify, from their point of view, the visible reception into the faith of all those who repented and confessed the grace and truth implied in the great Name into which they were baptized. That Jesus, during the forty days after His resurrection, when He spoke "the things concerning the kingdom of God," instructed them as to the full significance of baptism is highly probable; but we can gather the nature of that teaching only from what has come down to us in the writings of those who actually heard Him, and must avoid trying to be wise above what is written by reading into that teaching opinions which grew up in the Church hundreds of years afterwards. All that is necessary for us here to remember is that baptism was a well-known and prevalent custom before it was adopted by our Lord. The washing externally with water, to signify cleansing from defilement, had even a wider influence, as the "lustrations," so common in paganism, were connected not only with the cleansing of persons, but of animals and land from uncleanness supposed to be displeasing to the gods.

The putting off of a former life with its sins, or the giving up of a former faith, the adoption of the doctrine of a religious teacher, and the commencement of a new life founded on that teaching, were what baptism meant among the Jews; and there is reason to believe that they called such a change "a new birth," "a new life." The baptism of repent-

ance which John proclaimed was thus the setting forth in visible form, through the plunge in the Jordan, the change which his preaching had produced in the convert. As each disciple confessed his sins, the plunge was the appropriate sign of the washing away of his past life. He came forth as one prepared for the kingdom of God and for the Messiah who was about to appear.

When we consider the circumstances of Christian baptism as at first celebrated, we shall see both the appropriateness of the ceremony and how the phraseology of the New Testament acquires freshness when viewed in the light of that early period. Because we must recollect that the Church was then missionary, and making its converts from Judaism and heathenism. The persons baptised were, accordingly, chiefly adults who had become enlightened, and to whom baptism meant the most solemn of all events, the critical moment when they abjured their former faiths and habits of life, and made "the good confession before many witnesses" of their turning to the living God from idols, or to Jesus Christ as the true Messiah. At first those who were baptised were markedly converts. Later on, and before infant baptism became the rule, the catechumens—such young people as had been born within the Church and had been instructed, as well as converts from without—were also made to feel the force of the holy ordinance, when, as was the custom of the time, they went, generally at Easter-tide, in procession at night to the baptistery amid a blaze of torches; and turning to the west, the region

of darkness, they renounced the devil and all his works; and then turning to the east, repeated the Creed, expressing their faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and their renunciation of the devil, the world, and the flesh; and then going down into the water, were plunged,—immersed in it three times,—probably in reference to the Trinity, or to the three days when Christ lay in the grave; and coming forth, were anointed with oil and clothed in white raiment, and joining in hymns of joy, went to the church, where they took communion for the first time, and were received into the full fellowship of the body of Christ.¹ It is when we picture

¹ “Let us conceive ourselves present at those extraordinary scenes to which no existing ritual of any European Church offers any likeness. There was, as a general rule, but one baptistery in each city, and such baptisteries were apart from the churches. There was but one time of the year when the rite was administered—viz., between Easter and Pentecost. There was but one personage who could administer it, the presiding officer of the community, the bishop, as the chief presbyter was called in the first century. There was but one hour for the ceremony—it was midnight. The torches flare through the dark hall as the troops of converts flock in. The baptistery consisted of an inner and an outer chamber. In the outer chamber stood the candidates for baptism, stripped to their shirts; and turning to the west as the region of sunset, they stretched forth their hands through the dimly lit chamber as in a defiant attitude towards the evil spirit of darkness, and speaking to him by name, said, ‘I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works and all thy pomp and all thy services.’ And then they turned like a regiment, facing right round to the east, and repeated in a form more or less long their belief in the Father, Son, and the Spirit, which has grown up into the so-called Apostles’ Creed in the West, and the so-called Nicene Creed in the East. They then advance into the inner chamber. Before them yawns the deep pool or reservoir, and, standing by, the deacon or deaconess, as the case might be, to arrange that all might be done with decency. The whole troop undress completely as if for a bath, and stood up naked before the bishop. He put to each the

to ourselves such scenes that we understand the force of St Paul's words, "We were buried, therefore, with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4, R.V.) "Having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). The plunge beneath the water was as the burial of a past life and of an abandoned faith, while the rising again was through faith in the risen Saviour, the rising into a new life, even the life that is in Christ. On the part of the baptized there was abjuration of the past and acceptance of the Redeemer. On the part of Christ it was the visible sign and seal that He conferred what was signified and sealed—viz., forgiveness and regeneration, and the power of the Holy Ghost to walk henceforth in newness of life. St Paul gives further emphasis to this idea of Christian baptism when he connects it with Israel passing through the Red Sea, which was the outward and visible sign that the tyranny under which they had suffered as slaves was for ever broken. For Pharaoh and his host and their own

questions, to which the answer was returned in a loud and distinct voice as of those who knew what they had undertaken. They then plunged into the water. But before and after the immersion, their bare limbs were rubbed with oil from head to foot; they were then clothed in white gowns, and received as token of the kindly feeling of their new brotherhood the kiss of peace and a taste of honey and milk, and they expressed their new faith by using for the first time the Lord's Prayer" (Stanley's 'Christian Institutions,' p. 4).

former life were left drowned in the depths; and when they came up from the waters, they began the new life of national freedom. They were "baptized into Moses," for they accepted his guidance as God's messenger, were under the law of which he was the mediator, and, in their corporate life, they became "the Church that was in the wilderness."

Though far from being so simple as in apostolic times, the comparative simplicity of this early rite stands in contrast to the increasing elaboration of ceremony which took place in subsequent ages, so that by the end of the second or beginning of the third century we find it gradually assuming the type which afterwards led to the superstitious importance attached to the influence of the water and to the utterance of the sacred names—symbols, indeed, and names of spiritual realities, but yet so treated as to be made elements in something analogous to heathen incantations. Much that had a living meaning when the baptized were adults, who accepted baptism in full consciousness of the spiritual significance of the rite, became a superstitious observance implying belief in the power of the ceremony as if it were a charm; so that when children at play threw water on their fellows, using thoughtlessly the Triune name, and, in mere imitation of what they had seen, played at being priests, this was held to be true baptism, and effectual for forgiveness and regeneration. The use of water and of the formula was similarly employed by Francis Xavier when he scattered the consecrated water over multitudes of

heathen,—many of whom knew as little of what was being done as the stones on which the drops also fell,—and called them converts because the magical liquid had reached them. Such developments afford a warning, and teach us the necessity of falling back on Scripture, and of being cautious as to the authority we attach to the *obiter dicta* of any of the Fathers respecting the power of the ceremonial, as a ceremonial, to effect a spiritual change.

But the symbolism in its early use was graphic and suggestive. It may not be so marked now, when conditions are so much changed, and when the Church is in most places no longer missionary, making converts among an adult and heathen population, and when, instead of the immersion in the rushing river or in the deep pool of the baptistery, there is infant baptism with the sprinkling of a few drops of water. In old times, and under the special circumstances of the Church, the words of the apostles had a force which we are likely to destroy when, through a prosaic literalism, we translate them into elaborate dogmas, and confound the sign with the thing signified. For the reality of baptism is not effected by the water, however employed. The use of water is but the sign and seal of what God spiritually confers. For that sign and seal “cannot be intended to delude us,” but is appointed to assure us that He does fulfil His promise, and does bestow the grace signified as certainly as the sacrament is celebrated according to His ordinance. The elaboration of ceremony, instead of emphasising this divine act, of which the

sacrament is the divinely appointed witness, is apt to divert the thoughts from Christ to the ritual as if it had in itself the potency; and then the faith passes from confidence in the power and faithfulness of Christ, to confidence in the power of a priesthood and of a ceremony to effectuate that which God alone confers. This finds sufficient illustration in the history of the Church.

Let us, then, see what our Church teaches as to the nature of baptism, and indicate some of the Scriptural facts on which its teaching rests.

This teaching is founded on a belief in the power of the resurrection life of our ascended Lord, and the union we have with the divine through His humanity. His manhood is the ground of faith, for by His incarnation He took part in our flesh; in His humanity He bore the sin of the world; in His humanity He burst the bonds of death and ascended to the right hand of God; and it is as the God-Man that He now reigns. Through His humanity we are brought into fellowship with Him and in Him with God; we are made sharers of what He is now; and the sacraments, as we have seen, in their very materialism are suggestive of the incarnation and of the glorified humanity.

The importance of baptism is fully taught and illustrated in Scripture. When Christ instituted it, saying, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," He linked the command to the fact that all authority was given to Him in heaven and earth, and

also to the promise that He is with His Church "always, even unto the end of the world." His exaltation and His presence are thus connected with what His disciples are commanded to do, and there is at least suggested that what they thus fulfil carries with it the authority of the ever-present Lord abiding in His Church.¹

The words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," were undoubtedly interpreted by the Fathers as relating to baptism, and were so held in the Church till the days of Calvin; and, thus understood, they lent a vital importance to the ordinance, for they seemed to indicate its necessity before any one could enter the kingdom of God. We are told that this consensus of the Fathers must be regarded as decisive. It would be strange, however, if the Church now was to be silenced on that account, for patristic exegesis is not always to be defended. Many reasons have been urged against the acceptance of this ancient view, which we do not stay to discuss.² At all

¹ We do not quote the strong sayings in St Mark's Gospel, because they are now generally recognised as without authority, and are omitted in the Revised Version.

² "That the whole passage," writes Dr Leishman, "is meant to convey a rebuke to Nicodemus for his offer of a private profession of faith is confirmed by the spirit of the words with which it ended. That which Jesus spoke to an adult, before the baptism of the Christian dispensation was instituted in the completeness of its form and significance, can hardly have been intended to reveal the general law of the force of baptism when it came to be administered most frequently to infants born within His Church. The theory that the work of regeneration is invariably accomplished in baptism is contradicted rather

events, the words themselves seem to indicate two things, “water” and “spirit.” They recall the words of the Baptist, “I baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” The baptism with water signified the cleansing from the sin, of which repentance was the confession, and it is distinguished from the baptism of fire, which was the gift of the Holy Ghost, and this distinction seems to be assumed in the words of Christ.

In the Acts of the Apostles baptism is invariably than asserted by the saying of Jesus, ‘The wind bloweth *where* it listeth.’ His words regarding the new birth do not necessarily mean that there is one spiritual regeneration—the result of two causes, one spiritual, the other material. They may with at least equal propriety be understood to mean that for Nicodemus and all others in like circumstances there must be a regeneration by water and a regeneration by the Holy Spirit. He was a Jew proud of being born into the visible covenant which God had made with the sons of Abraham. He must be born anew into a better covenant, that of Christ; and so long as he withheld this open homage, he was entitled to no part in the new kingdom. But besides this, he must be renewed in the spirit of his mind by the Holy Spirit of God. Such a distinction between a visible and an unseen regeneration seems to be indicated by the explanatory words which immediately follow: ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’ If our Lord’s purpose was, as the circumstances and the context seem to show, to tell Nicodemus that two conditions were necessary to honest discipleship, and that He could not have the one fulfilled and dispense with the other, there is nothing in the passage to prove that invariable coincidence of baptism and spiritual regeneration which the Church of Rome deduces from it. At the same time, it shows baptism to be necessary, according to the common distinction of the Reformers, *non ex necessitate medii*—not as a means through which alone spiritual regeneration could be given—*sed ex necessitate præcepti*—as an ordinance commanded by God, to contemn or neglect which is a great sin” (Thesis on Baptism).

enforced, and that under most diverse circumstances. It was not enough at Pentecost that 3000 were pricked to the heart, and in repentance asked, "What shall we do?" Repentance must lead to baptism, and baptism was usually followed by the apostolic gift of the Holy Ghost. It was not enough that the Ethiopian eunuch should have come to believe in Jesus as the suffering Messiah. "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" is the instinctive cry of his heart. His faith was already strong, but it did not supersede the necessity for baptism. Cornelius had already received the gift of the Holy Ghost, but even that did not supersede the necessity for baptism in his case. The faith of the Samaritans, consequent on the preaching of Philip, led at once to baptism. St Paul had been converted, and was a believer in Jesus four days before Ananias said, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." The heart of Lydia was fully opened by the grace of Christ, yet baptism was at once administered to her and her household. The Philippian jailor believed with his whole house, yet conversion and faith were not sufficient, for they were all immediately baptized. Crispus, St Paul's convert at Corinth, "believed in the Lord with his whole house," and many others, hearing and believing, were also baptized.

Baptism is represented not as the cause of repentance, or of faith, or of spiritual life, but as invariably following these (Acts ii. 38-41; viii. 12, 13, 36-38; ix. 18; xi. 16; xvi. 14, 15, 31, 33; xviii. 8;

xix. 1-5). Baptism usually preceded the apostolic gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts viii. 15, 16; xix. 1-5), but not always (Acts x. 4-7). Yet in spite of the confession of his faith by Cornelius, and the manifestation in him of the gift of the Holy Ghost "as at the first," that his baptism should have been considered necessary is one of the strongest evidences of the importance attached to it by the apostle.¹

Nothing can be stronger than the witness which St Paul bears, and which is borne also by the other writers of the New Testament, to the place which baptism occupies. It is represented as marking the critical moment when the convert passes from death into life, and is a visible sign and seal of the changed

¹ The only passage in which an apparent non-recognition of the importance of baptism is discovered is in what St Paul says (1 Cor. i. 14-17): "I thank God I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." The tone of the whole passage is startling, and his reason, "Lest people should say I had baptized in my own name," must appear a weak one if he believed that baptism was the specific and only instrument whereby forgiveness, regeneration, and adoption were ordinarily communicated. The dread of being misunderstood could scarcely have excused him had he held such views of the ordinance, for we could not imagine him saying, "I thank God none of you received the washing away of sin, the gift of regeneration and adoption into life, through me." It is not enough to say that he had appointed others to baptize, for it cannot remove the conviction that he never could have written thus if he had regarded baptism as not merely the divinely appointed sign and seal of grace, but the only divinely appointed channel through which these specific graces were conveyed. But whatever the force of this passage may be, it cannot affect the teaching of St Paul elsewhere and the significance of the place that he assigns to baptism.

relationship in which baptism places the baptized. It assumes the condition of sin and death in which man lies by nature, as separated from God (Rom. v. 18-20, vi. 1-5; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Col. ii. 10-12). In these passages there is set, in contrast to the death in sin, the new life into which believers are raised in Christ, who is risen from the dead; and this change is associated with baptism: "In whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Even as circumcision had marked the moment when the Israelite was admitted into the new relationship created by the old covenant, so baptism marks the putting off of the life of the flesh, the burial of the past, and the rising again into the new life which is in the risen Lord, and bestowed because of the resurrection life of Him Who is now ascended.¹ As the

¹ There is one passage (1 Peter iii. 21) where, after reference to the ark,—which, floating on the waters, was the means of saving Noah and them that were with him,—it is added, "Which also after a true likeness (or in the antitype) doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation (or inquiry) of a good conscience towards God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Much has been made of these words by those who lay emphasis on the water of baptism as that on which the Church, like the ark, rests. But the emphasis here is not on the water, or on its cleansing, but on the "interrogation of a good conscience," which is a difficult expression, but probably means the demand for a good conscience, or, in other words, for the spiritual cleansing of which the "washing of the filth of the flesh" by material water was the sign.

proselyte to Judaism, although spiritually convinced and enlightened, yet, until he was actually circumcised, was not within the covenant or a member of the ecclesia to which belonged the ancient promise, so conviction and conversion did not of themselves fulfil all that baptism involved. For even as circumcision bestowed membership in Israel and all the privileges of membership, in like manner may baptism be regarded as the act whereby the convert was ingrafted into Christ and made a member of His Body, which is the Church, and a partaker of the benefits which flow from union with its great Head.

One remark it is necessary to make here to prevent confusion. Many, recalling controversies on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, stumble at regeneration being associated, as it is in our Standards, with baptism. They are repelled by the phrase, because it seems to imply a materialistic *ex opere operato* idea of a personal spiritual change being produced by an external rite. But they confound regeneration with conversion. Regeneration, as taught in relation to baptism, is rather that which is implied by the ingrafting into Christ. When a graft is inserted into a stock, that act is the pledge of the life that is to be. The ingrafting may not lead to a permanent life at all, for in the vine not all the branches are living branches. As baptism is an act whereby Christ signifies and seals and confers the grafting of the child or of the adult into His body, the Church, in which He lives by His Spirit, so regeneration in baptism

represents the pledge of the new life of which it is the sign and seal. In the early Church so prominent was the thought of regeneration that baptism was usually called by that name. Baptism was then "regeneration." Conversion is not an experience which belongs to the infant; while baptism is the pledge of a life, and the sacrament signifies and seals the gift of this life. It is in this sense that we must understand such phrases as the "laver of regeneration" (Titus iii. 4-8). The washing, the cleansing from sin, as the word "laver" signifies, is associated with the commencement of the new life which is by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost." They form one act, although the renewing, like sanctification, is continuous; and baptism is the sign and seal that Christ gives this washing, and also pledges the life which springs from the ingrafting into His body, the Church. And all this is grounded on the grace and mercy which appear in the life that was incarnate, and through the righteousness which justifies. In the case of adults there must ever be previous repentance and faith, or, in other words, conversion; and the baptism which follows their confession of Christ is the divinely appointed act in which the washing away of sin and their new relationship as ingrafted into Christ are signified and confirmed. In the case of infants there is necessarily an absence of conscious life, and so also of repentance and faith; but as in circumcision the infant, without apprehension of its meaning on his part, was made an heir of the covenant of promise, and a member of

the Church of God with all its privileges, so are the spiritual benefits of the new covenant by grace conferred on the baptized child. The act of baptism is the divinely appointed seal to the fact that the child is God's child and adopted into His family.¹

We propose now to give a brief *résumé* of the teaching of our Church, as expressed in her Standards, as to the nature of baptism, founded upon Scripture.

The Scots Confession, which was accepted as authoritative in 1560, was founded on the Genevan Confession, and on Calvin's Catechism. In treating of the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper are connected with circumcision and the Passover: "And thir Sacramentes, as weil of Auld as of New Testament, now instituted of God, not onelie to make ane visible difference betwixt His people and they that wes without His League; bot also to exercese the faith of His children, and, be participation of the same sacraments, to seill in their hearts the assurance of His promise, and of that most blessed conjunction, union, and societie quhilk the elect have with their head, Christ Jesus. And this we utterlie damne the vanitie of thay that affirme sacraments to be naething ellis bot naked and baire signes. No, wee assuredlie believe that be baptisme we are ingraphted in Christ Jesus, to

¹ The great Independent Owen says, "The children of believers are all of them capable of the grace signified in baptism, and some of them are certainly partakers of it, such as die in their infancy" (Works, vol. xvi. p. 259).

be made partakers of His justice, be quihlk our sinnes ar covered and remitted.”¹

These statements clearly represent the great end of all sacraments to be union and communion with the Head, Christ Jesus, and assert that in baptism we are ingrafted into Him, to be made partakers of His righteousness, by which our sins are covered and remitted. The force of the statements in the Confession is made plain by reference to Calvin’s Catechism (1545), which forms the basis of the teaching of the Reformers in their Catechism.²

¹ Scots Confession of Faith, Art. 21.

² “The significance of baptism standeth in two pointes: first, our Lord representeth unto us herein the remission of our sins; secondly, our regeneration. . . . The remission of sinnes is a manner of washing, whereby our souls are cleansed from their filthinesse even as the filth of the body is washed away by water.” Again: “Because the beginning of our regeneration standeth in the mortification of our nature, and the end that we become new creatures through the Spirit of God, therefore the water is poured upon the head to signify that we are dead or buried, and that in such sort that our rising again into a new life is therewithall figured, in that the pouring of water is but a thing of a very short continuance, and not ordained that we should be drowned thereby.” Not that the water is the washing of our souls, “for that belongeth to the blood of our Saviour Christ alone, which was shed that all our filth might be wiped away, and that we might be counted pure and without spot before God; the which thing then taketh effect in us, what time our consciences are sprinkled therewith by God’s Holy Spirit, but the sacrament doth testify and declare it unto us.” “Yet it is such a figure as hath the virtue joined with it, for God keepeth His promise, and deceiveth no man; wherefore it is certain that remission of sins and newness of life is offered to us in baptism, and that we receive the same there.” Our regeneration, in like manner, is connected with the death and resurrection of Christ. In His death “our old Adam is crucified, and our sinful nature is, as it were, buried.” The newness of life and obedience we obtain by His resurrection, and “we obtain this grace in baptism because we are there clothed with

The dogmatic teaching is most instructive. The ingrafting into Christ is connected with the spiritual union of the members with Him in His resurrection and eternal life; their union and communion with Him are set forth; and baptism is the sign and seal of the conferring thereof. Besides this regeneration, or imparting of the new life by the ingrafting into Christ, there is remission of sins because of the righteousness of Christ, of which we are made partakers, sealed to us in baptism. The question put to parents in the 'Book of Common Order' for baptism, as it appears in Knox's Liturgy, is one which may reveal the distance by which the Church of the present day has departed from earlier times: "Do ye here present this child to be baptized, earnestly desiring that he may be grafted in the mystical body of Jesus Christ?" We fear that, if such a question were put now, it would excite some surprise.

Another Catechism which obtained great influence in the Church of the Reformation was that of Craig, who was at once a famous scholar and one who had seen much of the world. He became colleague to John Knox in St Giles', Edinburgh, in 1568, was translated to Aberdeen, where in

Christ, and indued with His Holy Spirit, if so be we make not ourselves unworthy of His promises, which be there given unto us."

Calvin, therefore, clearly asserts that the sacraments are not bare signs, but such as signify a divine operation, and that God does fulfil what the sacraments testify; and he makes the grace of baptism consist in the remission of sins and regeneration. These views were adopted by our Scottish Reformers, and find full expression in the first Confession.

1581 he published his Catechism, and subsequently became chaplain to King James. He describes the two sacraments as testifying our receiving and continual feeding in God's household, baptism being the receiving or entrance, and the Lord's Supper the feeding in the household of God.¹

These earlier symbols of the reformed faith lead us to the present standards of the Church—viz., the Westminster Confession, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

Confession of Faith.—The words of the West-

¹ The following are the questions bearing upon baptism :—

Q. What is the signification of baptism? *A.* Remission of our sins, and regeneration.

Q. What similitude hath baptism with the remission of sins? *A.* As washing cleanseth the body, so Christ's blood our souls.

Q. Wherein doth this cleansing stand? *A.* In abolishing of sin, and imputation of justice.

Q. Wherein standeth our regeneration? *A.* In mortification and newness of life.

Q. How are these things sealed up in baptism? *A.* By laying on and taking off the water.

Q. What meaneth the laying on of the water? *A.* Our death and burial to sin.

Q. What meaneth the taking off again? *A.* Our rising again to a new life.

Q. Doth the external washing work these things? *A.* No; it is the work of God's Spirit only.

Q. Then the sacrament is a bare figure? *A.* No, but it hath the verity joined with it.

Q. Do all men receive these graces with the sacrament? *A.* No, only the faithful.

Q. What is the ground of our regeneration? *A.* The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Q. When are we partakers of His death and resurrection? *A.* When we are made one with Him through His Spirit. (See the reprint edited by Thomas Graves Law, 1883.)

minster Confession are as follows: "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His Church until the end of the world" (chap. xxviii. sect. 1).

The statements here are clear. Baptism is more than the solemn admission of the baptized into the visible Church; it is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace,—not an instrument itself operating, but a seal of the operation of God (Col. ii. 12), a sign and seal that the person baptized is ingrafted into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life. Whatever else it means, it shows the establishment of a new relation with the promise of the consequent graces and privileges.

"Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated" (chap. xxviii. sect. 5).

This section is an admirable protest against the harsh doctrine which makes baptism necessary to salvation. Augustine's revolting view, that unbaptized infants are infallibly damned, was the

outcome of the identification of saving grace with the ritual of the Church. Although in a measure accepted by the Romish Church, yet the instinct of a better spirit led to certain modifications, such as the liberty given even to women to baptize in extreme cases, and also to the prevalent semi-heathen, medieval belief in a region somewhere between heaven and hell, a *limbus infantum*, to which the souls of unbaptized children were consigned. The necessities of the theory also led to such horrible conceptions as that the penitent thief must have been baptized by the blood of Christ having been ejected upon him, because his salvation without baptism seemed to those old divines impossible. The shocking effects of this theory of baptism found, till recently, a barbarous illustration in the Anglican Church, when unbaptized infants were forbidden to be buried in consecrated ground. Verily the sacraments, which are revelations of grace, were converted into dogmas of repulsive cruelty when men could dare thus to treat infants, forgetting how He Who instituted baptism once took an unbaptized Jewish child in His arms and blessed it; and how He placed another child in the midst of His disciples and said, "Except ye be converted"—*i.e.*, the disciples, not the child—"and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." We may, therefore, be thankful for the unfaltering statement of the Confession that grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed to this ordinance as that no person can be regenerated or saved without

it, and also for the assertion, which found its first illustration in Simon Magus, that all who are baptized are not necessarily regenerated.¹

“The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered, yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God’s own will, in His appointed time” (chap. xxviii. sect. 6).

This section puts in a clear light what we are to understand by the words “really conferred by the Holy Ghost” as referring to the grace signified and sealed. It shows that the Reformers, true to their denial of the *ex opere operato* doctrine of Rome, and not less firmly holding that the grace signified is really conferred, recognised that the efficacy of the sacrament was not tied to the moment when the ordinance was administered, but that yet, in God’s appointed time, it is bestowed on such as “that grace belongeth unto.” The force of this is made clear by the phrase, “the right use of this ordinance,” which finds a certain exposition in the admirable answer given in the Larger Catechism to the question, “How is our baptism to be improved by us?” God does work His blessed work of grace

¹ We cannot accept the interpretation of this statement given in the treatise on baptism in the Scottish Church Society’s Conferences, Second Series, vol. i. It is only by a straining of words that any other meaning can be assigned except the plain one that persons may be regenerated or saved without baptism.

in those who do not resist that grace, who are willing to be workers together with Him in His good purpose towards them; and their baptism is a fact which may ever be used as a permanent and fixed ground, at once for confidence as to the grace of God, and of assured victory in the struggle against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

Larger Catechism.—The Larger Catechism exhibits even a richer conception of baptism than the Confession of Faith,—as we may see by comparing its fuller statement with that of the Confession. It is represented as “a sign and seal of ingrafting into Himself; of remission of sins by His blood, and regeneration by His Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible Church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord’s.”

These last words, when applied to infants, must be held as referring to their standing as represented by their parents or sponsors, who come under obligations to train them into the knowledge of what their baptism had signified.

Again, there is the valuable answer to Question 167: “The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration

of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vow made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavouring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body."

This statement stands almost alone among the symbols of the Churches of Christ as an exposition of the duties which baptism continually lays upon the baptized, and of the importance of recognising it as a basis on which practical life and character ought to be built. Dogmatically, also, it is of value, as affirming the connection between the life of the baptized and the resurrection life of the Lord. It would be well if the teaching here given was more enforced in the present day, and that baptism was kept before the minds of the members of the Church as a ground at once of responsibility and of assured grace.

The *Shorter Catechism* gives, in an abbreviated

form, the same teaching as the Larger Catechism, but calls for no further remark.¹

The definition of the nature of baptism contained in the 27th Article of the Church of England is practically identical with the standards of the Church of Scotland, although not so full or rich in its terms; but, as in the case of the Eucharist, a certain colour is given to its meaning in the Prayer Book which leaves more room for the conception of the *opus operatum* than the article, of itself, indicates. The prayers are capable of being regarded as expressing no more than what has been set forth above, or the views of those who take a "higher" ground. Regeneration, *e.g.*, may be viewed as actually tied to the administration, or the words may, with perhaps as much truth, be said to be but the solemn signing and sealing of God's grace,

¹ In the Palatine or Heidelberg Catechism, which bears on its title, "Translated into English, and printed anno 1591, by public Authority, for the Use of Scotland, . . . by Jeremias Bastingius, and sometimes printed with the Book of Common Order and Psalm Book," * there are interesting illustrations of the belief of the Reformers, as accepted at that time in our Church and country :—

Q. Is this baptism the very washing away of sins? *A.* It is not, for only the blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost doth cleanse us from all sin.

Q. Why, then, doth the Holy Ghost call baptism the washing of regeneration, and the washing away of sins? *A.* God doth not, without great cause, so speak, to wit, not only to teach us that, as spots of the body are cleansed with water, so our sins are purged by the blood and Spirit of Christ, but much more that, by this heavenly Token and Pledge, He may assure us that we are as surely washed inwardly from our sins as we are washed with outward and visible water.

* In Dunlop's Collection, vol. ii.

although not necessarily tied to the moment of baptism. The diversity of view which is tolerated in the Anglican Church has its ground in the diversity of tone which often distinguishes the terms of the Articles of Religion from the words of the Liturgy.

INFANT BAPTISM.

From the nature of the case, as already shown, adult baptism comes chiefly before us in the New Testament and in the early Church, because it was then a missionary Church making converts from Judaism and paganism. They were usually grown-up people who had been converted, who, with full consciousness of the nature of the step, were baptized. But there are those who, perceiving the appropriateness of baptism in such cases, fail to see similar reasons for the baptism of unconscious infants, and who ask what it can possibly mean for them. Those who call themselves Baptists go further, and assert that there is no express command for infant baptism, and no clear instance of such in the New Testament, and that, up to a comparatively late date in the early Church, baptism seems not to have been administered to children born within the Church till they came to the age when, as catechumens, they were able to answer for themselves.

The grounds on which infant baptism is usually defended are cogent.

I. It rests on the fact of continuity between the

Old Dispensation and the New. In the former the covenant was one of promise; in the latter the promise is fulfilled. "The Scripture," St Paul says, "preached the Gospel beforehand unto Abraham" (Gal. iii. 8), and he connects the Church with Abraham thus, "Know therefore that they which be of faith, the same are sons of Abraham." And again, "That upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 7, 14). The unity of the Church from the first is assumed throughout. Our Lord Himself declared that He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Under the Old Covenant children were made members of the Jewish Church by circumcision. The conception that their infants had no part with them in the community of God never dawned on the Israelites, for the community or nation, which constituted the people of God, did not consist of mere individuals, but of families—as is the case, indeed, in all society. Infants cannot be regarded as separate and unconnected, because from the very commencement of life they are members of a family, and, being dependent on father and mother, they are necessarily identified with family life. And this was clearly set forth at the first: "This is My covenant which ye shall keep between Me and you and your seed for ever; every male among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. xvii. 9, 10). Circumcision was the sign and seal that the infant son of each Israelite was, in virtue of his parentage, a member of the covenanted nation. It did not make him a spiritual son of Abraham, for

“they are not all Israel who are of Israel.” The circumcision was not the circumcision of the heart, but it was the instrument which recognised the seed of the promise, and the seal whereby there was admission to the privileges of the chosen nation.

Accordingly, when the Church of the first covenant gave place to the Christian Church, the natural course taken by those accustomed to the former dispensation was to regard the children of believers as identified with their parents. We have to realise the associations which prevailed in the age of the apostles. From time immemorial the Jews had beheld infants admitted to the membership of the Jewish Church. They had seen the same sealing ordinance of circumcision employed, when not only proselytes were admitted, but also the families of these proselytes, with their infants, and even their slaves—all being treated as one with the parent or master—being circumcised and made proselytes with him. The idea that the children must be excluded until each had grown to years when it could for itself make an intelligent profession of faith, as the proselyte father had done, was quite foreign to the beliefs and the habits of the period. And there is no breach of continuity hinted in the New Testament. Had a new law come into force excluding children, we should expect its declaration in clear terms. The burden of proof does not, therefore, lie with those who regard children as fit subjects for baptism,—which took the place of ancient circumcision, even as the Lord’s Supper took the place of the Passover,—but it lies with

those who deny the principles which ruled throughout the former Dispensation, to show the evidence for such a change having been made by Divine appointment. Where is there such evidence?

It is not necessary to fall back on passages which show the prevalence of adult baptism, because the circumstances of the Church, as a missionary Church, necessitated the conversion of adult Jews and Gentiles. The point is whether the principle recognised from the days of Abraham was annulled, and the children of converts expressly excluded from admission by baptism into the Christian Church.

On the contrary, the evidence points in an opposite direction. We do not dwell on the great saying of Jesus, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven," except to say how strange it would be if those so markedly described as typical of the kingdom of heaven should be excluded by Him from the Church on earth. Christ pronounced them fit for the kingdom of heaven: are we to treat them as heathen till they grow up and are "converted," forgetting the word to His disciples, "Except ye be converted" (not the children, but the disciples), "and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"? But we have positive indications to the contrary in the instances in which whole households belonging to converts are said to have been baptized along with the head of the house. The probability of children being among them seems almost a certainty when

we remember what an ancient household was; and this is strengthened by what took place, as we have seen, in the case of proselytes, where all—not only the children, but the slaves—were circumcised. The principle involved is illustrated and applied to baptism by St Paul when he says that “the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” It cannot be that by “holy” he meant sanctified by the Holy Spirit, for that must ever be the result of a personal religious experience, impossible for an infant. They were “holy” only in the sense in which Israel was “a holy nation,” because they were within the covenant of promise.

Among the early Fathers, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and Origen assert infant baptism; and the latter not only speaks of it as the custom in his days, but expressly says, “The Church received the tradition from the apostles that baptism ought to be administered even to little children.” For these and many other reasons, which need not be quoted here, we hold that infant baptism rests on broad principles which ruled from the first in Israel, and which were adopted and acted upon by the apostles, and have governed the action of the universal Church till the present day, except among the estimable Christians who have assumed, on conscientious but, we believe, mistaken grounds, a separatist position.¹

¹ See additional Note V., p. 242.

NOTE V.

As to the form of Baptism the Confession of Faith (chap. xxviii. 3) declares, "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person." So, too, in the Directory for the Public Worship of God it is said that "for the manner of doing of it, is not only lawful but sufficient, and most expedient to us, by pouring or sprinkling of the water in the face of the child, without adding any other ceremony." The Rev. W. H. Macleod, B.D., furnishes me with the following interesting statement: "In 1617 the Scottish Parliament passed an Act enjoining parishes to have utensils for ministration of the Sacraments, and in that Act it is specially mentioned that the baptismal vessels were to consist of 'Basines and Lavoires'—an account of which may be found in Burns's 'Old Scottish Communion Plate,' pp. 512, 513. There are twenty-eight parishes in which the original vessels are preserved. The basins are too shallow to have admitted the raising of the water with the hand, but the 'lavers' or 'lavoires'—or, as they are elsewhere termed, 'ewers'—have very small holes through which the water was poured. It is needless to say that this custom has completely disappeared."

LECTURE VII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER OR EUCHARIST.

No one, however slightly acquainted with the state of opinion now prevalent among our Presbyterian Churches with respect to the Westminster Confession, can doubt the divergence which has arisen on many important points between practical belief and the teaching of the recognised symbols. On no subject, perhaps, has this change been more marked than in respect to the nature of the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper. With standards which assert a doctrine practically identical with that of the Church of England,¹ with a creed whose doctrines are derived from those of the Reformers who were opposed to what is popularly termed Zwinglianism on the one side and to Lutheranism on the other, the teaching and the ordinary belief of Presbyterians are now too frequently of the school which the Reformed Churches and Calvin² opposed, and which the Westminster Divines have implicitly condemned.

The causes which have led to this result are

¹ For full statement of the authorities, see Dr Harold Brown on the Thirty-nine Articles, pp. 6-8, 703-709.

² Although the doctrine of the Reformed Churches is thus identified with the name of Calvin, it must be borne in mind that he himself

not difficult to discover. The protest which Presbyterianism has long maintained against the sacerdotal pretensions of certain communions; the influence of that Puritanism—tinged with Independency,¹ and denying all high conceptions of Church order—which was first accepted as a merely political ally, but soon affected theological belief; the democratic tendencies of Presbyterianism itself; the Rationalism of the eighteenth century, followed in the nineteenth by the revival of an “Evangelicalism” which laid such emphasis on the necessity for individual “conversion” of a particular type as to overlook the importance of church and sacraments; the more recent movements in England towards extreme priestly teaching; the disintegrating effect of sectarianism,—these and other causes have produced a development of opinion, false or true, regarding the nature of the Lord’s Supper almost as widely different from the doctrine laid down by the Westminster Divines as that doctrine is removed from the position held by Luther or the modern Anglican “Catholics.”

As this inquiry is chiefly of a historical nature, few remarks will be made respecting the credibility or the merits of the doctrines involved. Our chief object will be to present the teaching of the Scottish Church as to the nature of the Eucharist, and only so far as necessary with reference to the doctrines

expressly claimed the authority of antiquity. Dr Harold Brown gives an interesting summary of the opinions held by the early Church, and shows the great support thereby afforded to the belief of the Reformers (Thirty-nine Articles, pp. 679, 700).

¹ Nevertheless Owen and other eminent Independents incline to the views of Calvin.

held by other communions. It is impossible even to attempt an adequate discussion of a subject so vast, and embracing such a variety of opinions. Such a discussion would require a lengthy treatise.

We will first briefly set forth the light which Scripture throws on the holy ordinance. Its institution by Christ at one of the most solemn moments in His life is impressively and simply represented in the first three Gospels, and is also recorded by St Paul as having been received by him "from the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 23). With some slight variation of expression these give an identical account of what our Lord did and said. While keeping the Passover and observing its usual ritual, as it approached its termination,—for the "cup of blessing" was probably the last cup that was taken,—He took bread—doubtless the unleavened bread of the Passover—and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body."¹

¹ We put in parallel columns the record as given by the three Synoptics and St Paul (R.V.):—

ST MATTHEW.

And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins.

ST MARK.

And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many.

ST LUKE.

And He received a cup, and when He had given thanks, He said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you.

ST PAUL.

The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, This is My body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

The memory of the Passover is present throughout. The new covenant is called "the covenant in the blood" of Christ, recalling the first covenant and the words of Moses to Israel, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you" (Exod. xxiv. 8). The reference to the body broken and to the blood shed plainly points to the death of Christ on the cross, a fact which it is of importance to keep in view. The separation of the blood from the body clearly indicates death—the dead body. The shedding of the blood is the life given, for "the blood is the life," and yet, as the blood of the victim under the law was carried within the veil of the tabernacle, so the life of Jesus who died passes within the heavenly veil, not as blood, but in the glory of Him "who was alive and became dead, and is alive for evermore." The ordinance, in this light, is commemorative: that it has other references and significations we shall see as we proceed.

But while the above is the account of the institution of the sacrament by Christ as recorded in the Gospels and by St Paul, many believe that there is another exposition of its character given by the Lord in St John vi. The teaching there is profoundly interesting, and touches on the whole question of the spiritual life and nourishment of the Church and its members. We cannot enter into any minute study of the words; yet it is necessary to form an opinion as to their force, because misunderstanding of their meaning has, according to our view, been the fundamental cause

of much error. The main question which has divided the Church for ages is whether it is the sacrament that is set forth here, or whether *the words in St John and the sacrament do not refer to the same thing*—viz., the spiritual feeding of the believing soul on Jesus Christ, a feeding of which the sacrament is the sign and seal, and also a means whereby it is realised. Indeed, if the sacrament is the actual eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Christ, or the actual partaking of which Christ spoke, it would cease to be a sacrament, for it would be itself the reality. The whole chapter teaches the same great truth. It is taught when He calls Himself “the bread of God which cometh down out of heaven and giveth life unto the world,” and He explains what the partaking of that bread is: “He that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” Again, “And this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Believing seems throughout to be recognised as the equivalent of “eating.” And He goes on: “He that believeth hath eternal life. I am the bread of life. . . . I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world.” And then, as the Jews ask in astonishment “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” He reiterates in startling language what He has been teaching throughout: “Verily, verily, I say unto

you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. . . . For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in Him.” We have to notice (1) that the whole passage refers to the same truth, whether He represents Himself as the bread of life that must be eaten, or speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood; (2) that the flesh and blood—not the body, but *the flesh with the blood shed and separated from it*—must refer to death; not to the living One on the throne, but to Him who became dead. The cross with its burden of death is what is here set forth; and if so, the very statement makes a literal understanding incredible. The distinction betwixt the words “cadaver” and “corpus,” betwixt the dead Christ and the living and glorified Redeemer, renders it impossible to regard the eating and drinking as referring—it is difficult to express it without seeming irreverence—to the *corpse* instead of to the spiritual partaking of the quickening life of Him who, having died for our sins, ascended in victory and is alive for evermore. The fact that by His atoning death He has obtained redemption for us is ever associated with His life glorified. But “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died unto sin once; but the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God” (Rom. vi. 9, 10). (3) What is equally clear is that it cannot be the physical flesh and blood of the crucified Lord that we are to eat

and swallow, for when the Jews so understood it, they are rebuked: "The flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." In spite of the ingenuity shown by some to get another significance out of these words, no plain reader of the passage, in view of the materialistic misunderstanding of the disciples and the rebuke of the Lord, can hesitate as to the meaning—viz., that His reference is not to a fleshly but a spiritual partaking, such as He intended when speaking of the bread of life. A further hint, pointing in the same direction, seems given in the words, "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me." We are at once reminded of the great saying by the well of Samaria, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." The will and mind of God was the satisfaction and the nourishment of His life as a Son. He lived "because of the Father," and we similarly live by spiritually appropriating and assimilating Christ in His spiritual fulness.

When this chapter, however, is taken as referring directly to holy communion, and as giving authority for the belief that in that sacred rite we actually manducate and swallow the real flesh and drink the real blood of Christ, we perceive the same gross error which our Lord condemned in the disciples who left Him. The spiritual partaking of Christ, the appropriation and assimilation of Him in the fulness of His humanity Who, in His exaltation and glory, is at once the source of our life and its con-

tinuous nourishment, becomes a totally different conception when partaking is made to be a physical action. It is also of the utmost importance to notice that the character of faith is changed from the faith that rests on and appropriates Him, to a faith that the bread and wine have, by means of a rite, been supernaturally changed into the actual flesh and blood of the Lord. The belief in a change of substance is quite different from a spiritual faith that apprehends Christ Himself. Both the teaching of the chapter and the holy communion are involved in utter confusion when such a view is taken. Dr Westcott, than whom no more scholarly student of St John has arisen in the Anglican Church, thus sums up his conclusions:—

“It follows that what is spoken of, ‘eating of the bread which cometh down from heaven,’ ‘eating the flesh of the Son of man,’ ‘eating His flesh and drinking His blood,’ ‘eating Him,’ ‘eating the bread which came down from heaven,’—the succession of phrases is most remarkable,—cannot refer primarily to the holy communion; nor can it be simply prophetic of that sacrament. The teaching has a full and consistent meaning in connection with the actual circumstances, and it treats essentially of spiritual realities, with which no external act, as such, can be coextensive. The well-known words of Augustine, ‘*Crede et manducasti*,’—‘Believe, and thou hast eaten,’—give the sum of the thoughts in a luminous and pregnant sentence.”

And again Dr Westcott says:—

“To attempt to transfer the words of the discourse with their consequences to the sacrament is not only to involve the history in hopeless confusion, but to introduce over-

whelming difficulties into their interpretation, which can only be removed by the arbitrary and untenable interpolation of qualifying sentences. In this connection two points require careful consideration. The words used here of the Lord's humanity are 'flesh' and 'blood,' and not, as in other cases where the sacrament is spoken of in Scripture, 'body and blood.' And again, St John nowhere refers directly to the sacraments of baptism and holy communion as outward rites."

Both Hooker and Waterland state that the early Greek Fathers rejected the reference of these words to the Eucharist. We therefore refuse to accept the assumption that this profoundly spiritual chapter of St John affords grounds for those materialistic views which have so often darkened, as we hold, the true signification of the sacrament. "We contend," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "that the sense of these words is spiritual; so Christ affirmed it; they that deny the *spiritual sense*, and affirm a natural, are to remember that Christ reproved all senses of these words that were not *spiritual*." ¹

When we pass from the Gospels to the Acts and Epistles we discover various names given to the ordinance. In the former it is called simply "the breaking of bread" (Acts ii. 42, xx. 7). It is only once termed the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20). "The Lord's table" occurs in 1 Cor. x. 21, and "communion" in 1 Cor. x. 16. The term by which it is most widely known in the Church—"the Eucharist"—is not used at all, but is derived from the phrase "the cup of blessing," and from the fact that the

¹ The Real Presence, sect. 3, 6.

Lord "gave thanks" before distributing the elements. The bread is significantly described as the one loaf (1 Cor. x. 16), suggesting the unity of believers in Christ: "We, being many, are one loaf." In no case is it called a sacrifice.¹

As we recall these and other passages, we learn that they all refer to the death of Christ, for even the communion (*κοινωνία*) on which St Paul dwells—both in reference to the idea of participation in the life of the glorified Lord, and in the fellowship into which we are brought with the whole household of faith—is associated with His death.

We have also the conception of the sacrament as *commemorative*; it is so described in the institution by Christ, whether as given in the Gospels or by St Paul; likewise as *prospective* in relation to the second advent, for it is to be observed "till He come." St Paul, in addition, touches on the "showing forth" or proclamation of His death, a proclamation which is for all ages, for the sacrament abides, a visible gospel of the grace of God.

St Paul opens a wide and suggestive field when he calls the Eucharist the "communion of the body and blood of the Lord." This word communion

¹ The use of the word *ποιεῖν*—"Do this in remembrance of Me"—being a term which elsewhere is frequently employed in a sacrificial sense, is much relied on by High Churchmen as giving countenance to the conception that the Eucharist is a sacrifice. This is strongly supported in a recent work, 'The Early Eucharist'; but in an able review in the 'Spectator' (January 3, 1903) this opinion is denied, and in the following issue (January 10), in reply to a letter from the writer of the book, the reviewer writes, "Our contention is that the neutral object *τοῦτο* makes it impossible for a scholar to recognise such a usage here."

is of vital importance. The original (*κοινωνία*) has various shades of meaning, but the root-idea is, possessing something in common with another, for it is in respect to persons, not things, that the word is properly used. Thus it means partnership with another in business (Luke v. 10); the community of goods on the part of believers (Acts ii. 44); sharing one's possessions with another, because of brotherly fellowship, the giving being the result of the fellowship (Rom. xii. 13; Gal. vi. 6); fellowship in a common work (Phil. i. 4); fellowship in the sufferings of Christ (Phil. iii. 10), or with the divine nature (2 Peter i. 10), or the divine glory (1 Peter v. 1). It is used to express the closeness of the union which a believer has with Christ, through the Holy Spirit—the *unio mystica* of the Reformers (1 Cor. i. 9; Phil. ii. 8). So also the impossibility of any fellowship existing between light and darkness brings out the same signification (2 Cor. vi. 14). The profound passage in 1 John i., dwelling on our fellowship with the Father and the Son, is most instructive. The apostle says that the eternal life which was with the Father, and was, therefore, eternally the life of God, had been manifested to the apostles, and that they were now declaring it to those who had not seen, as they had, that “Word of life” which had become flesh and dwelt on earth; and they declared this to believers in order that they might have fellowship with them in this eternal life, because they knew that their own fellowship was with the Father and the Son. Through the humanity of the incarnate Lord, and through enlightenment in His glory, they had

been brought to share the light of God, and were also brought into sympathy with His thoughts, filled with His holy life, and made, according to the measure of their faith, one with the divine nature and character through the life that is in Jesus. In and by the humanity of Christ they had reached the divine, and, as a consequence, through this fellowship they had learned to understand what sin is, and the righteousness which delivers from sin (vers. 6-10). Further, the fellowship which brings each to Christ, of its very nature puts them into fellowship with all who are of the same mind and share the same life (vv. 3, 7). This fellowship is indeed the end of salvation, for it is the life eternal.¹

These considerations of the meaning of communion or fellowship will help us to understand the force of the same term when applied to the sacrament in the important passage (1 Cor. x. 16, 17), "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion

¹ It may be noticed in connection with the sense of communion given above, that the thought of fellowship with the god who was worshipped, and fellowship with the other worshippers, was what lay at the basis of primitive sacrifices. Dr Robertson Smith, in his work on Semitic Religion, says that it was the idea of a common feast, partaken of both by the god and the worshipper, which primitive sacrifices originally meant; and in these primitive religions there was a further approximation to certain Christian beliefs, because it was held that in the eating of the offering they ate the god, and thereby received of his nature. An interesting *résumé* of the evidence and of its bearing—both on Greek religions and on the fellowship which the Eucharist expresses—will be found in an exceedingly able paper on the sacraments by the Rev. W. E. Inge, in the recent volume of essays, 'Contentio Veritatis.' John Murray, 1902.

of the body of Christ? Seeing that we who are many are one bread [loaf], one body: for we all partake of the one bread." We have to notice here that the word *κοινωνία* is not used in the sense of communicating—a sense which it strictly never has. It is not the communicating of the blood or body to the recipient that is taught, but the fellowship which all the members have in common with the one Head, and with one another. They agree in sympathetic appreciation, because they all share the one life, one love, one spirit, which is the life, love, and spirit of the Master. The blood comes here before the body, perhaps because, as Dean Stanley suggested, He was about to allude to heathen rites in which the libation came before the sacrifice. But it clearly means that there is an identification of the believer with the blood. He sees its meaning for himself, he agrees with it, and, as he takes the cup, he takes what the wine signifies, even Christ's blood shed for him. There is an "Amen" on his part to all that the cup brings. He has fellowship with the cup. "The loaf which we break, is it not a communion of the body"—not of the flesh but of the body—"of Christ?" for through it he reaches the Lord, and has communion or fellowship with Him in all that is set forth. What is alluded to also emphatically implies the fellowship in which the individual takes part with the Church, which is His body; for the loaf sets forth its unity, while the partaking each of a portion sets forth the multiplicity of the membership. It is plain that the whole passage is founded on the com-

munion of believers with Christ, an identity of nature because an identity of life, leading to the unity of all who are one in the living membership of Christ. This view is confirmed by the reference to the Jewish altar and the heathen sacrifices. In them the worshipper did not eat the altar, but, as he partook of the sacrifices, he appropriated what they—in themselves signs—signified. He identified himself with the altar. The heathen sacrificer did not eat the demon, but, in partaking of the sacrifice, he identified himself with the heathen beliefs. He drank “the cup of demons,” for it was the visible sign and seal of personal appropriation of what the demon-service signified.

When we leave Scripture we pass into another atmosphere, as we enter the world of heated controversy wherein curious metaphysics and dogmatic mysticism and unspiritual rationalism have contended, and which has increased in intensity since the fourth century, and has, perhaps, been seldom in greater evidence than in the present day. The history of the doctrine of the sacraments has been one of change from the simplicity of the early faith and of the early ritual to a condition of things which, in many places and in various aspects, presents features which, were they to rise from the dead, St Paul or St John could scarcely recognise as a representation of that “breaking of bread” they were familiar with in the ecclesiæ of their time. The growth in doctrine and ritual has been so much from simplicity to complexity that the student who tries to understand it must go to patristic or medi-

eval authorities rather than to Scripture; to the Schoolmen rather than to the apostles; or to the wrestlings of the theological giants of the sixteenth century, whose contentions were often literally with "garments rolled in blood," rather than to the upper room in which the old believers met to break the bread together, as being themselves priests unto God, and to partake of the sacred elements which proclaimed the Lord's death until He come again.

Speaking generally, there are four forms of belief under which opinions may be classified: (1) *The Romanist* view, (2) *the Lutheran*, (3) what is popularly called *the Zwinglian*, and (4) *the Reformed* or *Calvinist* view, which is the doctrine of our Church, and is also expressed in the Articles of the Church of England.

1. *The Romanist*.—The sacrament of the Eucharist, as set forth by the Council of Trent, definitely asserts transubstantiation, which is, that the "substance" of the bread and wine as distinct from the "accidents" is changed at consecration into the "substance" of the actual flesh and blood of Christ, and that when duly celebrated there is a renewal of the sacrifice on the cross in an unbloody form, which is of efficacy for the sins both of the living and the dead. The distinction of the "substance" and "accidents" of matter—derived from the Aristotelian philosophy and from the subtleties of the Schoolmen—cannot well be maintained in an age of science, or in the light of modern

philosophy, and the illustrations usually given to assist belief, from the changes produced by heat on matter, can lend no support to the hypothesis that a completely different substance takes the place of what had previously been present.

The “accidents” of “substance” are the external qualities of which the senses take cognisance, such as appearance, colour, taste, smell; but the “substance” is that which underlies these. In the sacrament, therefore, the “accidents” of the bread and wine are said to remain—to all appearance it is bread and wine. The senses recognise it as bread and wine, but in reality the bread and wine have given place to flesh and blood, and accordingly the “accidents” do not inhere in any appropriate substance. The qualities of bread and wine are suspended on nothing (Cat. C. of T., 42).

The Council of Trent also teaches that the whole Christ—His human soul and divine nature, as well as His body and blood, His “bones and nerves”—is contained under the least particle of the bread.¹

In the mass there is offered to God a true and proper sacrifice² (Cat. C. of T., Q. 70), one and

¹ The whole Christ, His human soul and divine nature as well as His body and blood, is “contained whole under the least particle of the bread” (Cat. C. of T., Q. 31, 32, 33, and 40).

² In the original Eucharist the oblation consisted of the fruits of the earth contributed by the people, and offered with thanksgiving. It was associated with gifts for the poor, of which the presiding officer took charge. The second part of the service was the communion. There was no thought of sacrifice in the primitive Church beyond the oblation of the fruits of the earth and the loving sacrifice of praise and self-consecration to Christ, as we learn from the Didache. Dr Hatch has shown that the doctrine of the body and blood of Christ being

the same as that on the cross, although not in a bloody manner (Q. 74). It is "truly a propitiatory sacrifice by which God is appeased and rendered propitious to us" (Q. 76); and again, "By the Eucharist are pardoned and remitted lighter sins, commonly called venial"¹ (Q. 50). It is a perpetual sacrifice, by which our sins are expiated (Q. 68), and is profitable for "the dead whose sins have not yet been fully expiated"² (Q. 77).

offered in sacrifice in the Eucharist began with Cyprian. The belief is closely associated with the priestly claims which commenced very much at that period, and are in such evidence now. But if one would learn the more spiritual view of the sacrifice we are called to render, let them turn to the fine passage in Dr Moberly's 'Ministerial Priesthood,' pp. 254, 255. On the other hand, for a vigorous protest against the ordinary conception of the ministry as a sacrificial priesthood, read Bishop Lightfoot's treatment of Sacerdotalism in his volume, 'The Christian Ministry.'

¹ "As a sacrament it is, to them that receive the divine host, a source of merit, . . . but as a sacrifice it is not only a service of merit, but also of satisfaction; for as in His passion Christ the Lord merited and satisfied for us, so those who offer this sacrifice, by which they communicate with us, merit the fruit of the Lord's passion, and satisfy" (Cat. C. of T., Q. 69). Again, the Council also condemns "under anathema those who would assert that in it is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice," or that "to offer" means anything else than that Christ is given as our (spiritual) food (Q. 70).

² "The Church must have a perpetual sacrifice by which our sins may be expiated, and our heavenly Father, often grievously offended by our crimes, may be turned from wrath to mercy, from the severity of just punishment to clemency"; and again, "Nor could our Saviour, when about to offer Himself to God the Father on the altar of the cross, have given a more illustrious indication of His unbounded love toward us than when He bequeathed to us a visible sacrifice by which that bloody sacrifice soon after to be offered once upon the cross would be renewed, and its memory daily celebrated with the greatest utility to the consummation of ages by the Church diffused throughout the world" (Cat. C. of T., Q. 68).

It is impossible here to trace the various shades of belief regarding transubstantiation which have passed over the minds of members of the Church of Rome since the shaping of the doctrine in the middle ages, and its definition at Trent—from the revolting grossness¹ indulged in by some, up to the

¹ The grossness referred to finds early as well as late illustration. As to the former, what can be more shocking than the phrases employed by the great Chrysostom when he says, “We bury our teeth in His flesh ;” “Our tongues are red with His most sacred blood” (quoted, ‘Contentio Veritatis,’ p. 291). The refinement of the doctrine may be found among the more spiritually thoughtful. The great schoolman, Thomas Aquinas, whose authority is so appreciated by the Romish Church, although living at the period when transubstantiation was taking shape, seems to have denied the fundamental belief on which the doctrine rests: “Corpus Christi est localiter in uno tantum loco, scilicet in cœlo, sed ut in sacramento significante et continenta est alibi, non tamen ubique.” Or, in the saying of Damascene, quoted in Cat. of T., Q. 39, “The body is truly united to the divinity, the body born of the holy virgin ; not that the body assumed descends itself from heaven, but that the bread itself and wine are transmuted into the body and blood of Christ.” And Cardinal Newman states that “our Lord neither descends from heaven upon our altars, nor moves when carried in procession. The visible species change their position, but He does not move” (quoted by Dr Gore, ‘The Body of Christ,’ p. 3). Some appear to hold that the immolation of the body of Christ in the sacrament of the mass is only representative (Quesnel), and a spiritual offering. It is but a memorial before God of the sacrifice once offered on the cross, and deriving its virtue wholly from that : while there is a continuance of the sacrifice, it is not a repetition. One may find it difficult to reconcile such views with the words of the Council of Trent, and still more difficult to reconcile them with the popular beliefs, which are certainly not contradicted by the priesthood, or with the usages which notoriously prevail among the populace. One may, however, be thankful that there are those who can find room for a more spiritual meaning than what the Council of Trent and the prevailing practice of the Church may seem to us to warrant.

refinements by others, who, emphasising certain words, reach a meaning that seems more reasonable than the articles would of themselves suggest.

2. *Lutheranism*.—The Lutheran doctrine approximates in a sense to that of Rome, while it absolutely denies transubstantiation, and protests against the withholding of the cup from the laity. Luther, with his impulsive nature and not always philosophical habits of thought, clung to the literalism of the words of Christ, “This is My body, this is My blood”; “*Hoc est corpus meum*” was often his sole argument. But he held that while the elements of bread and wine remained bread and wine, yet that those who partook of them at the same time truly received, manducated (chewed), and swallowed the actual body and blood of the Lord. It was not the flesh and blood which died on the cross, but the body and blood of the ascended Lord, made actually present with and under the earthly species, and partaken of not only by the pious but by the impious also.¹ He held that the manner in which He was present when on earth was different from His presence in the sacrament. In the former He

¹ “What, then, is the sacrament of the altar? It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine, by the word of Christ instituted and sent to be manducated and drunk” (‘*Cat. Maj.*,’ p. 553; ‘*Winer’s Confessions*,’ p. 284). “Concerning the sacrament of the altar, we hold that the bread and wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ, and not only given and taken by pious but even by impious Christians” (‘*A. Sm.*,’ p. 330; ‘*Winer’s Confessions*,’ p. 283).

occupied a position in space that was circumscribed by material conditions, but, in the latter, while in space, He is not circumscribed, but independent of such conditions, and, in virtue of the union of His divine and human nature, He is present everywhere. This involved the ubiquity of the body of Christ. The Reformers denied this, and quoted St Paul's arguments as to the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of our bodies as signifying an identity of condition; and also Augustine's saying that the body of Christ must be in some place in heaven, because of it being a true body. That He is said to be at the right hand of God did not, the Lutherans reply, contradict this belief, because the right hand of God is everywhere; so the Lord is, as respects His human divine nature, everywhere present. He was not, in a sense, more in the sacrament than elsewhere, for the sacrament was but an instance of the general law of this universal presence; but the promise of His presence in the sacrament brought about the contact or touch whereby the body and blood are offered for manducation and reception. The necessity of contact was firmly held by Luther. Whatever modifications of these views may have taken place in the history of the Lutheran Church, the doctrine of "consubstantiation," by which term it is usually described, — that is, the presence of the real body and blood of Christ with or under the elements, and received, not merely by faith, but by the physical mouth, and manducated and swallowed with the elements, — has remained characteristic. It is,

according to Lutheranism, "manducatio oralis" as well as "spiritualis."¹

While Calvin rejected the local fleshly presence which was taught by the Lutherans, he agreed with them in believing that there is a real presence in the Eucharist. The bread and wine are more than "signs" or "badges" that stimulate and confirm faith.

"If we believe the truth of God, we must believe that there is an inward substance of the sacrament in the Lord's Supper joined to the outward signs; and so, that as the bread is given to the hands, the body of Christ is also communicated, that we be partakers of Him."²

"I come to close quarters at once with the man who maintains that we are not partakers of the substance³ of the flesh of Christ unless we eat it with our mouths. . . . Although I distinguish between the sign and the thing signified, I do not teach that there is only a bare and shadowy figure, but distinctly declare that the bread is a sure pledge of that communion with the flesh and blood of Christ which it figures. For Christ is neither a painter, nor a player, nor a kind of Archimedes, who presents an empty image to amuse the eye; but He truly and in reality

¹ The Lutherans do not seem to have been much moved by the objections urged against ubiquity. Like Calvin himself, when pressed by reasoning, they took refuge under the shield of mystery: "Ego mori malim, quam hoc affirmare, quod illi affirmant: Christi corpus non posse, nisi in uno loco, esse" (Melancth., *Oper.*, ed. Bretsch., vol. i. p. 25). "Nam illa est indigna Christianis opinio, quod Christus ita quandam cœli partem occuparit, ut in ea tanquam inclusus carceri sedeat . . . de rebus cœlestibus ex verbo Dei, non ex geometria faciendum judicium" (idem, vol. ii. p. 1049).

² De Cœna Domini.

³ See, however, what is said as to Calvin's ideas of Substance on p. 274.

performs what He promises by an external symbol. Hence, I conclude that the bread which we break is truly the communion of the body of Christ.”¹

He thus, as will be afterwards more fully shown, while abjuring the local and carnal presence taught by Luther, agrees with him in affirming a real communion of the flesh and blood of Christ, not received by the mouth, but spiritually, and by faith.

3. *Zwinglian Doctrine*.—The third great school of sacramental belief is that which is popularly termed Zwinglian. This forms the opposite pole to the teaching of Rome and of Luther. And as we can determine the position reached by Calvin by marking how far he agreed with Luther, and the point at which he denied the Lutheran conception of consubstantiation, we are, in like manner, enabled to define his position as against the other extreme by showing his divergence from Zwinglius.

The views of Zwinglius are not to be learned from the later Helvetic and similar Confessions—the productions of a time when the Swiss Churches in sympathy with Zwinglius had advanced much nearer to Calvin than in the earlier days of the Reformation. We must go back to a period before the “Mutual Consent” was drawn up, or any agreement come to between the two parties. If we are to discover the views which excited the strong opposition of Calvin, it is necessary to gather them from the writings of Zwinglius himself and from the

¹ Tracts, translated by Beveridge, vol. ii. p. 508.

representations of his belief given by contemporaries.

According to these authorities, he denied that in the taking of bread and wine there is any higher meaning than that those symbols, being of their own nature fitted to suggest to the faithful the grand facts of the incarnation and passion of the Lord Jesus, become instruments whereby the mind is stimulated to apprehend vividly the forgiveness of sin and the promises of the Gospel.

“The sacraments make faith, but it is an historical faith, for all festivals, trophies, yea, monuments and statues, produce historic faith—that is, they show that once such an event occurred of which the memory is kept fresh, as the Paschal festivals among the Hebrews, and the *σεισάχθεια* among the Athenians, or the victory associated with a certain place, as a stone serves to assist us. In this way the Lord’s Supper creates faith—that is, it certifies that Christ was born and suffered.”¹

The sacrament, accordingly, does not give grace, but only witnesses to grace, and quickens grace by the aid it affords to faith, as being a graphic representation of the objects of faith. If there is any feeding upon Christ in the heart by faith, it is of the nature of mental cognition of the Gospel truth, and apprehension of the Gospel promises to which the bread and wine bear visible witness.

“Spiritually to eat the body of Christ is nothing more than to rest with spirit and mind on the mercy and goodness of God through Christ. . . . Sacramentally to eat the body

¹ Niemeyer’s Confessions, p. 49.

of Christ, when we wish to speak accurately, is, the sacrament being added, to eat the body of Christ mentally and spiritually.”¹

He explains himself to the Emperor Charles, to whom this exposition of his faith was submitted, by asking what his majesty must experience when he tries to answer the question, “What shall I do to be saved?” After showing that the only answer which can satisfy, and so feed the soul, is the redemption procured by the incarnation and suffering of Christ, he proceeds:—

“Therefore I say, when you comfort yourself in Christ, then you eat spiritually His body. . . . Truly when you come to the Supper of the Lord with this spiritual manducation and render thanks for so great a benefit, for the deliverance of your soul, who art delivered from the calamity of despair, and for a pledge, by which you may be assured of eternal blessedness, and along with the brethren you partake of the bread and wine, which are now a symbol of Christ, then you eat sacramentally, when, that is, you do inwardly what you have marked outwardly, when the mind is refreshed with that faith which you have witnessed to by symbols.”²

To attribute any efficacy to the sacrament beyond what arises from the suggestive fitness of the symbols, as if things *ab extra* could in any other way affect our spiritual condition, would, in his opinion, be a return to Judaism. The very idea of “body” is, in every sense but in metonymy, exclusive of body being by any possibility “spiritually received.”

¹ Niemeyer, p. 47.

² Ibid., p. 48.

“As the body cannot be nourished by a thing that is spiritual, so neither can the soul by a thing that is bodily. If it is the natural body of Christ that is eaten, I ask whether it is the body or the soul that is nourished? If it is not the body then it is the soul; if it is the soul, then the soul feeds on fleshly things, and it would not be true that spirit is born only out of spirit.”¹

We must, however, recollect that, like Calvin, Zwinglius held faith in the sense of *fiducia*—that is, personal trust—and this led to the conception of a spiritual union with Christ, and of the sacrament as being a means whereby this union was deepened and the believer spiritually fed. He held that the sacrament ought never to be adored as if it were Christ, but that it was a sign for faith to apprehend, yet a sign which never could be the reality: that seemed to him the error of transubstantiation.

Zwinglius ascribes seven virtues to the sacraments. (1) They are venerable as founded by Christ. (2) They afford witness to historical facts. (3) They visibly express Gospel truths. (4) They are a pledge of the love of God. (To illustrate this Zwinglius compares them to the marriage-ring worn by the Empress, in contemplating which she can say, “*Hic est rex meus.*”) (5) They form a picture or analogy of the relationship between Christ and His people. (6) They strengthen faith, because speaking in the ear of faith with a heavenly voice. “As the listener to music receives not the material strings and cords of the instrument, but the divine music which thrills from them, so it is not the bread and wine, but the

¹ Niemeyer, p. 48.

divine voice which speaks through them. ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish.’” (7) As sacraments they are oaths, whereby those who receive them become pledged to Christ, declare themselves members of His Church, the mystical body of which He is the Head.¹

4. The *Reformed doctrine*, of which Calvin is the great exponent. Calvin asserted a real and spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper, whereby the believer has, through faith, such true communion in the body and blood of the Lord that a life-giving influence is experienced, and spiritual nourishment imparted to the soul, even as he feeds physically upon the symbolical elements of bread and wine. In order, however, to make this belief clearer it is necessary to consider the view Calvin took of the relationship of the person of Christ to His body the Church. The Christology of the great theologian of Geneva is the true key to his doctrine respecting the sacrament.

The union of Christ with His people is a doctrine very fully set forth by our Lord and the apostles, who teach that the Church, as the mystical body of the Lord, derives its life, unity, and organic character from Him, the Head, indwelling through His Spirit in all the members. The importance of this truth has been recognised by all sound theologians; and in recent years it has acquired new interest from the influence exercised by certain schools of

¹ Niemeyer, pp. 50-52.

thought in England and Germany, which have afforded a philosophic basis for a belief in the virtue of the sacraments as appointed means for deepening and increasing the mystical union.¹

According to these views, there is created out of fallen humanity, by the quickening power of Christ, a new humanity—a new ideal mankind—which, being united to Christ as the Head, deriving all life from Him, is united in Him to God. Christ in His humanity, as it were, flows out into the Church, which is His body. Christianity is, accordingly, a new life, produced by the life of Christ. The constitution of His person as God and man—including body and soul—is the centre and source out of which a new life is generated and sustained in man, body, soul, and spirit. Christianity, of course, includes doctrine, ethics, redemption, discipline; but its essential feature is a new life, a participation in the full and complete life of Jesus Christ.

This conception of the relationship of the person of Christ to the Church as His body, the realisation of His manhood by the Church, and of union through that manhood with the divine, even with God, is intimately connected with his special views regarding the nature of the sacrament.

“The being [says Dorner] which is destined to be the universal head of men and angels, can only really occupy such an all-determining position, can only be the universal

¹ For a list of modern theologians who have given prominence to these views, see Dorner's ‘*Doctrine of the Person of Christ*,’ Div. II. vol. iii. p. 232.

source of reconciliation and atonement, of the sanctification and perfection of spirits—nay, even of nature—on the supposition that He is the one place in the world where God has personal being, on the supposition that He is the living seat of the personal God, in His relation to the universe. Light is shed by this truth on the doctrine of the atonement, and particularly on that of substitution: the case is similar with the idea of the Holy Supper. Only by taking this truth for our point of departure can we arrive at a full and living conception of the Church: apart from it, we shall be shut up to the dry idea of the Church as an institute for pure doctrine, or for moral education, or for the redemption of individual souls, or for the arrangement of a common cultus. It, on the contrary, shows us that Christ, the divine human person, unites soul and body, appropriates to Himself a constantly growing body out of the material of humanity.”¹

“Christianity is, in the fullest sense, organic in its nature. It reveals itself as a peculiar order of life in Christ, and from Him as a personal centre reaches forth towards man as a whole, in the way of true historical self-evolution, seeking to form the entire race into a glorious kingdom of God. From this, all takes its full significance.”²

Although it would be an anachronism to attribute to Calvin opinions which have gained their true development in more recent years, yet there can be no doubt that the *Unio Mystica* between the person of Christ and His body the Church formed an essential element in the theology of Luther and Calvin, and is the true key to the doctrine of the body of Christ in the sacrament of the Supper

¹ Dorner, ‘On the Person of Christ,’ Div. II. vol. ii. p. 233.

² From a remarkable paper by Ullman, the substance of which is given in a preface to the interesting work of Nevin, ‘On the Mystical Presence.’ Philadelphia, 1846.

which they severally held. The mind of Germany had been prepared for such a belief by the Mystics, of whom Master Eckhart and Tauler may be taken as the representatives. It was a conception naturally congenial to the warm and imaginative spirit of Luther, who gave to it vivid expression in many of his writings.¹ Calvin does not enlarge upon it to the same extent, yet, when he does allude to it, his language shows the vital importance he attached to its acceptance.

“To that union of the head and members, the residence of Christ in our hearts—in fine, the mystical union—we assign the highest rank. Christ, when He becomes ours, makes us partakers with Him in the gifts with which He was endued; . . . but Osiander, spurning this spiritual union, insists on a gross mixture of Christ with believers; and accordingly, to excite prejudice, gives the name of Zwinglius to all who subscribe not to the fanatical heresy of essential righteousness, because they do not hold that, in the Supper, Christ is eaten substantially.”²

When Calvin approaches the formal discussion of the nature of the Lord's Supper, he distinctly bases his belief regarding the partaking of Christ in the sacrament on this mystical union, whereby the Church participates in the entire humanity of the glorified Redeemer. He dwells on the significance of the Incarnation as that which not only made atonement possible, but as the means whereby man becomes united to the “Logos,” and participates in

¹ See passages quoted by Dorner, ‘Person of Christ,’ Div. II. vol. ii. pp. 66-72.

² Calvin's Inst., iii. 11, sect. 10.

Christ's divine-human nature, which includes body and soul. Christ's life thus passes over to His people, and through the communication of that life man is quickened in body, soul, and spirit. Redeemed humanity thus becomes, as the Church, His body—"we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."¹

This quickening effect, not merely of the word of the Gospel when accompanied by the Spirit, but of the person of Christ, the incarnate "Logos," is distinctly connected by Calvin with the Eucharist. The eating of bread and wine in the sacrament not only represents and seals, as a testimony or pledge, the covenant relationship of the believer to Christ and to His body the Church, but it also implies that, in a mysterious and supernatural manner, he feeds spiritually upon Christ Himself. The life-giving flesh of Christ affects the whole man, so that Christ's life as a whole is communicated to the faithful, not by local contact or "gross mixture of material," yet effectually, even as the sun, which is locally in the heavens, quickens and affects life on earth.

"There are some who define the eating of the flesh of Christ, and the drinking of His blood, to be, in one word, nothing more than believing in Christ Himself. But Christ seems to me to have intended to teach something more express and more sublime in that noble discourse in which

¹ Yet we must not forget that these words, so often quoted by High Churchmen, find no place in the Revised Version of the New Testament.

He recommends the eating of His flesh—viz., that we are quickened by the true partaking of Him, which He designates by the terms eating and drinking, lest any one should suppose that the life which we obtain from Him is obtained by simple knowledge.”¹

“I am not satisfied with the view of those who, while acknowledging that we have some kind of communion with Christ, only make us partakers of His Spirit, omitting all mention of His flesh and blood. . . . The flesh of Christ has not such in itself as to make us live, seeing that by its own first condition it was subject to mortality, and even now, when endued with immortality, lives not by itself. Still, it is properly said to be life-giving, as it is pervaded with the fulness of life for the purpose of transmitting it to us. . . . In His humanity fulness of life resides, so that every one who communicates in His flesh and blood at the same time enjoys the participation of life. . . . The flesh of Christ is like a rich and inexhaustible fountain, which transfuses into us the life flowing forth from the Godhead into itself. Now, who sees not that the communion of the flesh and blood of Christ is necessary to all who aspire to the heavenly life? Hence those passages of the apostles: the Church is the ‘body’ of Christ; His ‘fulness’; He is ‘the Head,’ from whence the whole body fitly joined together ‘maketh increase’; our bodies are ‘the members of Christ.’ We perceive that all these things cannot possibly take place unless Christ adheres to us wholly in body and spirit.”²

“The sum is, that the flesh and blood of Christ feed our souls, just as bread and wine maintain and support our corporeal life. . . . But though it seems an incredible thing that the flesh of Christ, while at such a distance from us in respect of place, should be food to us, let us remember how far this secret virtue of the Holy Spirit surpasses all our conceptions, and how foolish it is to wish to measure

¹ Calvin's Inst., iv. 17, sect. 5.

² Ibid., iv. 17, sects. 7 and 9.

its immensity by our feeble capacity. Therefore, what our mind does not comprehend, let our faith conceive—viz., that the Spirit truly unites things separated by space. That sacred communion of flesh and blood by which Christ transfuses life into us, just as if it penetrated every part of our frame, He testifies and seals in His Supper, and that, not by presenting a vain or empty sign, but by there exerting an efficacy of the Spirit by which He fulfils what He promises.”¹

“It is declared in my writings more than a hundred times, that so far am I from rejecting the term substance, that I ingenuously and readily declare that, by the incomprehensible agency of the Holy Spirit, spiritual life is infused into us from the substance of the flesh of Christ. I also continually admit that we are substantially fed on the flesh and blood of Christ, though I discard the gross fiction of a local intermingling.”²

That these quotations, chiefly from the ‘*Institutes*,’ written in early life, express the abiding conviction of Calvin, can easily be shown by many references to his later works. They are to be found in the proposals for Mutual Consent, which were submitted to the Swiss churches which adhered to Zwinglianism, as decidedly as in the passages written against Zwinglius.³

We cannot understand these views of Calvin without apprehending how his conception of the real presence was closely connected with his view of the meaning of substance. It is not the presence of substance in the physical sense, as involved in tran-

¹ Calvin’s *Inst.*, iv. 17, sect. 10.

² Calvin’s *Tracts*, vol. ii. p. 502.

³ Compare Calvin’s *Tracts* (Beveridge’s translation), vol. ii. pp. 157, 158, 170, 171, 213, 214, 219, 279, 577.

substantiation, and in Luther's view of the extension of body in space—the ubiquity of body—and its presence with or under the elements in the Eucharist. Calvin's belief was that substance was present as the *vis* or *power* (*potentia*) exercised by any body, however widely it may be distant physically. Thus the sun is present in the heat and light which affect us, although it is located in the distant heavens. Presence, then, does not necessarily imply what is local, but what is effective.¹

"A sense of piety," he writes, "clearly dictates that He infuses life into us from His flesh in no

¹ There is a remarkable passage in a letter of Leibnitz, himself a Lutheran, but anxiously labouring for a reconciliation between the Lutherans and the Reformed. "I have seen, when the matter is carefully considered, that, if they [the Reformed Church] abide by the doctrine of Calvin in this matter, then the thing may be regarded as accomplished. For I have read over not only the pages of his 'Institutes' bearing on this, but also other writings of his as well, and have made excerpts, from which it is evident that he has seriously, pointedly, and constantly maintained the real and substantial conception of the body and blood of Christ; and what he denied regarding the real presence cannot be understood of any other presence than of the presence in dimension, in which assuredly Christ cannot be in the supper, and yet His human or bodily nature be retained. But if he had understood what, you may remember, I explained, that the substance of the body consists in the power (*potentia*) primary, active, and passive, and that the presence of the substance consists in the immediate application of this, even apart from dimensions, he would not have written what St Calixtus, especially in his 'Consid. Colloquii Toruniensis' and elsewhere, has disapproved—viz., that the body of Christ is as far distant from us as heaven is from the earth. This is not agreeable to what some of the Reformed seemed to be saying, rather in the spirit of Zwinglius than of Calvin; but perhaps, when the matter is more carefully looked into, they will return to better things. Certainly the Anglican Confession is agreeable to the mind of Calvin." (Leibnitii Opera, vol. v. pp. 241, 242. Genevæ, 1768.)

other way than by descending into us by His energy, while, in respect of His body, He is in heaven.”¹

It is curious to find this view clearly given, and cleverly illustrated, in the famous Tract 90, written by Newman long before he had any idea of the great change which afterwards took place in his life. It is also remarkable that, although his remarks are upon the 28th Article of the Church of England, which is undoubtedly Calvinistic, yet he never mentions the name of Calvin in connection with it.

“To assist our conception of this subject, I would recur to what I said about the presence of material objects, by way of putting my meaning in a different point of view. The presence of a material object, in the popular sense of the word, is a matter of degree, and ascertained by the means of apprehending it which belong to him to whom it is present. A fly may be as near an edifice as a man ; yet we do not call it present to the fly, because it cannot see it ; and we call it present to the man, because he can. This, however, is but a popular view of the matter ; when we consider it carefully, it certainly is difficult to see what is meant by the presence of a material object relatively to us. It is, in some respects, truer to say that a thing is present which is so circumstanced as to act upon us and influence us, whether we are sensible of it or no. Now this is what the Catholic Church seems to hold concerning our Lord’s Presence in the sacrament, that He then personally and bodily is with us in the way an object is which we call present ; how He is so we know not, but that He should be so, though He be millions of miles away, is not more inconceivable than the influence of eyesight upon us is to a blind man. The stars are millions of miles off,

¹ Tracts, vol. ii. p. 240.

yet they impress ideas upon our souls through our sight. . . .

“In answer, then, to the problem how Christ comes to us while remaining on high, I answer just as much as this, that He comes by the agency of the Holy Ghost, in and by the sacrament. Locomotion is the means of a material presence; the sacrament is the means of His spiritual presence. As faith is the means of our receiving it, so the Holy Ghost is the agency, and the sacrament the means, of His imparting it, and therefore we call it a sacramental presence.”¹

The following propositions may be accepted as containing, so far as they go, a fair statement of what Calvin means by the spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper, and the manner in which the believer feeds upon Him in his heart by faith:—

1. The body of Christ is in heaven, and cannot, therefore, be locally present in the Supper, but He is effectually present in His power, even as the sun is present with us through its power, although located in the distant heavens.

2. The flesh and blood are not manducated, nor is there to be supposed any transfusion or admixture of the substance of Christ. The bread and wine are signs of the presence of Christ.²

¹ Tract 90, pp. 59, 60.

² He gives this illustration: “Our Lord wishing to give a visible appearance to His Spirit at the baptism of Christ, presented Him under the form of a dove. St John the Baptist, narrating the fact, says that he saw the Spirit of God descending. If we look more closely, we shall find that he saw nothing but the dove, in respect that the Holy Spirit is, in His essence, invisible. Still, knowing that this vision was not an empty phantom, but a sure sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit, he doubts not to say that he saw it (John i. 32), because it was represented to him according to his capacity.”

3. To feed on Christ is, however, more than a moral apprehension of the truth of Christ—more than a quickening influence of the Holy Spirit convincing and enlightening the mind through the Word, and producing the new life of regeneration in the soul. Christ, though in heaven, yet in the fulness of His humanity—embracing body and soul—vivifies and nourishes the believer in the fulness of His humanity, including body and soul.

4. Faith grafts us into His mystical body, which derives all its life from Him, the Head, flowing out into the members. This union is mystical, but real, and is witnessed to in baptism.

5. The Eucharist, by its symbolic elements of bread and wine, sets forth the truth of the Person of Christ as the life and nourishment of the soul; by its symbolical actions of eating and drinking it testifies our actual participation in Christ through the Spirit. These symbols are more than pictures or attestations. They not only signify and seal, but so exhibit and apply the reality that there is distinct spiritual effect.

6. The Holy Spirit so acts that the substance of Christ's flesh and blood, though in heaven, affects the whole man. The influence is spiritual and real. The signs signify realities.

One cannot but feel, in reading these statements of Calvin and of others who similarly treat the doctrine of the real presence, that there is much difficulty introduced, likely to affect many sincere believers, by the manner in which the "body and blood,"

sometimes "the flesh and blood,"¹ of the Lord are represented as if they were literally made present. They thus seem to be distinguished from the ascended and glorified person of the Lord, which would be a grievous error, because, as we have shown, the terms body broken and blood shed refer to the dead Christ, and can be only retrospectively related to Him, "Who is the Living One, and became dead, and is alive for evermore." The denial of any physical presence is of course continually in evidence, and it is perhaps an inevitable consequence of the mingling of language borrowed from what is physical to set forth what is purely spiritual, that the impression should be produced that it is literally the flesh and blood from which there comes the virtue and power of the sacrament, as if they were objectively distinguished from Him who is at the right hand of God. The broken body and shed blood are the ground of our redemption, and it is this fact which is to be proclaimed in the Holy Supper till the Lord shall come. The sacrament is, moreover, the sign and seal of His presence in His ordinance: that He gives us Himself in His fulness to us, as He gives the bread and wine, with all the benefits of His death, and quickens us by the virtue of His eternal life, so that we feed upon Him spiritually, assimilating by faith and love what He spiritually is, to our spiritual

¹ It is remarkable that, except in the 6th chapter of St John, the reference of which to the sacrament is, as we have seen, exceedingly doubtful, the word "flesh" is never used in connection with the Eucharist in the New Testament.

nourishment and growth in grace. The elements are the means of a true communion with Him, for they are means through which we reach the Lord, Who Himself gives us these signs of His presence and grace,—gives them to us individually, as we each take the bread and wine into our mouths. We thus “feed upon Him in our hearts by faith.” “The cup of blessing which we bless” becomes thus a “communion” (*κοινωνία*, fellowship) “of the blood of Christ. The bread which we break becomes a communion of the body of Christ.”

Our next duty is to trace the connection between the doctrine of Calvin and that of the standards of the Church of Scotland.

It might be sufficient to compare the language of the Confession of Faith and of the Larger and Shorter Catechisms regarding the Lord's Supper, with the passages we have quoted, to prove their identity. But, lest it should be supposed that theological terms had acquired such new meaning during the course of the century which divides the time of Calvin from that of the Westminster Divines, that the similarity of expression is not enough to prove unity of belief, it will put the matter beyond doubt if we give some specimens from what might be formed into a catena of Confessions and statements of doctrine, stretching from the period of the Reformation till that of the Westminster Assembly. The relationship between the Reformed Churches on the Continent and those in England and Scotland were so close and intimate, not only at the time of the

Reformation, but during the subsequent century, that the symbols which were accepted abroad may be taken as fairly representing the state of opinion at home.

It may, then, be broadly asserted that, while under the influence of Lutheranism, there can be traced in some of the Confessions (such as that of Augsburg, 1530, or of Saxony, 1551, or of Wurtemberg, 1552)¹ “higher” doctrine regarding the mode in which Christ is present in the sacrament than Calvin would have sanctioned: in no instance do any of the Confessions of the Reformed Churches from 1530 take “lower” ground than that which he occupied.²

It will be sufficient to indicate the character of these Confessions if we quote from two, which are not selected because of any peculiarity in language or doctrine, but as being of special value in our present inquiry, because they had a close connection with the Reformed Churches in Britain.

The later Confession of Helvetia, written by Bullinger, and not only sanctioned by the pastors of Zurich in 1556, but accepted by the Swiss Churches, including that of Geneva, as well as by the churches of Savoy, Poland, Hungary, and Scotland, may be taken as indicating the general belief of the Reformed

¹ We do not reckon the Socinian Confession of Racovia or the declarations of the Arminians.

² This statement holds true even respecting the Confession of Basle, which is supposed to have been the production of Œcolampadius, the learned coadjutor of Zwinglius. See Niemeyer's Confessions, p. 96.

communions at that date. It thus speaks of the Lord's Supper:—

“ Besides that formal spiritual eating, there is the sacramental eating of the body of the Lord, whereby the faithful man not only is partaker, spiritually and eternally, of the true body and blood of the Lord ; but also by coming to the table of the Lord, doth outwardly receive the visible sacraments of the body and blood of the Lord. True it is that the faithful man, by believing, did before receive the food that giveth life, and still receiveth the same ; but yet, when he receiveth the sacrament, he receiveth something more. For he goeth on in continual communication of the body and blood of the Lord, and his faith is daily more and more kindled—more strengthened and refreshed by the spiritual nourishment. For while we live, faith is continually increasing, and he that outwardly doth receive the sacrament in true faith, the same doth inwardly receive the sign, but also doth enjoy, as we have said, the thing itself. . . . We do not, therefore, so join the body of the Lord and His blood with the bread and wine, as though we thought that the bread is the body of Christ more than after the sacramental manner ; or that the body of Christ doth lie hid corporally under the bread, so that it ought to be worshipped under the forms of bread ; or yet that whosoever he be which receiveth the sign, he receiveth the thing itself. The body of Christ is in the heavens, at the right hand of His Father ; and therefore our hearts are to be lifted up on high, and not to be fixed on the bread, neither is the Lord to be worshipped in the bread ; though, notwithstanding, the Lord is not absent from His Church as they celebrate the Supper. The sun, being absent from us in the heavens, is yet, notwithstanding, present among us effectually ; how much more Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, though in body He be absent from us in the heaven, yet is present among us, not corporally but spiritually, by His lively operation ; and so He Himself promised in His last Supper

to be present among us (John xiv. 15, 16). Whereupon it followeth that we have not the Supper without Christ, and yet that we have, meanwhile, an unbloody and mystical Supper, even as all antiquity called it.”¹

The Confession of Belgium is another declaration which is of importance as indicating the state of opinion regarding the sacrament among the Reformers until so late a period as 1619. The Synod of Dort, whose great object was to condemn the tenets of the Arminians, expressly adheres to the Belgic Confession of 1566 on all other points of doctrine, including those which refer to the sacrament. Upon that subject it thus expresses itself:—

“To the intent that Christ might figurate and represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread, He hath ordained visible and earthly bread and wine for the sacrament of His body and blood ; whereby He testifieth that, as truly as we do receive and hold in our hands this sign, eating the same with our mouths, whereby afterwards this our life is sustained, so truly do we by faith (which is to our soul instead of hand and mouth) receive the very body and true blood of Christ, our only Saviour, in ourselves, unto the conservation and cherishing of spiritual life within us. And it is most certain that Christ, not without good cause, doth so corporally commend unto us this His sacrament, as one that doth indeed work that within us, whatsoever He representeth unto us by these His holy signs ; although the manner itself, being far above the reach of our capacity, cannot be comprehended of any ; because that all the operations of the Holy Ghost are hidden and incomprehensible. Neither shall we err in saying that that which is eaten is the very natural body

¹ From Hall's ‘Harmony of the Protestant Confessions,’ pp. 318, 319.

of Christ, and that that which is drunk is the very blood of Christ, yet the instrument or means whereby we do eat and drink them is not a corporal mouth, but even our souls and spirits, and that by faith. Christ, therefore, sitteth always at the right hand of His Father in heaven, and yet for all that, doth not anything the less communicate Himself unto us by faith. Furthermore, this Supper is the spiritual table, whereat Christ doth offer Himself to us, with all His benefits, to be participated by us, and bringeth to pass that in it we are partakers as well of Himself as of the merit of His death and passion. For He Himself, by the eating of His flesh, doth nourish, strengthen, and comfort our miserable, afflicted, and comfortless souls; and, in like manner, by the drinking of His blood, doth refresh and sustain the same.”¹

Turning from the symbols which were of authority on the Continent to those publicly acknowledged by the Reformers of Great Britain, let us first pay regard to those that were received in Scotland.

There is such an unbroken testimony regarding the belief prevalent from the days of Knox till the time of the Covenanters, that no reasonable doubt can be entertained respecting the state of opinion in the Church of Scotland when she sent representatives to Westminster in 1644.

The Confession used by the English Congregation at Geneva, and approved by the Church of Scotland at the beginning of the Reformation, is, as may be expected, unmistakably Calvinistic. The following is its statement regarding the Lord's Supper:—

“The Supper declareth that God, as a moste provident Father, doth not only feed our bodies, but also spirituallie

¹ Hall's Harmony, pp. 336, 337.

nourish our soules with graces and benefites of Jesus Christ; which the Scripture calleth eating of His flesh, and drinking of His blood."

Still more explicit are the statements in Calvin's Catechism, which was long of authority in the Church of Scotland, and is engrossed in its First Book of Discipline.¹

¹ "Why is it that our Lord representeth unto us His bodie by the bread, and His blood by the wine?

"To signify unto us, that what propertie the bread hath toward our bodies, that is, to feed and sustaine them in this transitorie life; the self-same propertie also His bodie hath touching our soules, that is, to nourish them spiritually. And in like manner, as the wine doth strengthen, comfort, and rejoyce man; even so His blood is our full joy, our comfort, and spiritual strength.

"... Have wee Christ joyned unto us by none other meanes than by His Supper?

"Yes: for wee receive Christe with the fruition of His benefites, by the preaching of the Gospell, as Sanct Paule witnesseth, in that our Lord Jesus doeth promise us therein, that wee are bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh; and again, that He is the bread of life, which came downe from heaven to nourish our soule: and in another place, that wee are one with Him, even as He Him selfe is one with His Father, and such like (1 Cor. i. 9; Eph. v. 30; John vi. 35, 41, and xvii. 21).

"... What is it then, briefly, that we have by this signe of bread?

"That the bodie of our Lorde Jesus, for so much as it was once offered up for us in sacrifice, to bring us into God's favour, is nowe given unto us, to assure us that we are partakers of the reconciliation.

"... Receive wee, in the Supper, only the tokens of the things afore rehearsed, either are they effectually in deed there given unto us?

"For so much as our Saviour Christ is the trueth itselfe, it is most certaine, that the promises which He made at the Supper bee there in deede accomplished, and that which is figured by the signes is truly performed: so then, according as He there made promise, and as the signes doe represent, there is no doubt that He maketh us

The old Scots confession, properly so called, which received the sanction of Parliament in 1560, has peculiar interest, not only as an authority of the first rank in determining the belief held at the time of its promulgation, but as expressing the doctrine held by the Covenanters respecting points of faith, at a period when attention was given chiefly to Church government, worship, and discipline. This Confession of 1560 was formally accepted by the king in 1580, and subscribed and renewed in 1581 and 1590. It is expressly recognised in the "Band made for the maintenance of true Religion," and again in the National Covenant, when subscribed in 1638, and afterwards approved by the General Assemblies of 1638 and 1639. It

partakers of His very substance, to make us also to grow into one life with Him.

"How may this be done, seeing the bodie of our Saviour Christ is in heaven, and wee are here as pilgrimes on the earth?

"Verely it commeth to passe by the wondrous and unsearchable working of His Spirite, who joyneth easely together things being farre asunder in place.

"Then His bodie is not presently included in the bread, neither His blood contained within the cup?

"No; but cleane contrariwise: if we will have the substance of the sacrament, we must lift up our heartes unto heaven, where our Saviour Christ is in the glorie of His Father, from whence we have sure hope that He will come for our redemption; and therefore we may not search Him in these corruptible elements.

"So then thy judgment is, that there be two thinges in this sacrament: the substance of bread and wine, which wee see with the eye, touch with our hande, and taste with our mouth: And also Christ, by whom our souls are inwardly nourished?

"You say trueth: and in such sorte we have therewith also a sure token, and, as it were, a pledge of the risinge againe of our bodies, in so much as they are already made partakers of the sign of life" (Collection of Scotch Confessions, vol. ii. pp. 240, 241, 243, 244).

was thus publicly recognised by the nation and by the Church from 1560 to the time of the Westminster Assembly. The following is its doctrine of the Eucharist :—

“And this we utterlie damne [condemn] the vanitie of thay that affirms Sacramentes to be nathing ellis bot naked and baire signes. No ; wee assuredlie beleeve, that be baptisme we ar ingrafted in Christ Jesus, to be made partakers of His Justice, be quhilk our sinnes ar covered and remitted. And alsua, that in the Supper richtlie used, Christ Jesus is so joined with us, that Hee becummis very nourishment and fude of our saules. Not that we imagine anie transubstantiation of bread into Christ’s body, and of wine into His naturall blude, as the papistes have perniciouslie taucht, and damnable beleaved ; bot this unioun and conjunction, quhilk we have with the body and blude of Jesus Christ in the richt use of the sacraments, wrocht be operation of the Holy Ghaist, who by trew faith carryis us above all things that are visible, carnal, and earthly, and makes us to feede upon the body and blude of Christ Jesus, quhilk wes anes broken and shed for us, quhilk now is in heaven, and appearis in the presence of His Father for us : And (zit) notwithstanding the far distance of place quhilk is betwixt His body now glorified in heaven, and us now mortal in this eird ; zit we may assuredly believe, that the bread quhilk wee break is the communion of Christes bodie, and the cupe quhilk we blesse, is the communion of his blude. So that we confesse, and undoubtedlie beleeve that the faithful, in the richt use of the Lord’s Table, do so eat the bodie and drinke the blude of the Lord Jesus, that He remains in them and they in Him : Zea, they are so made flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bones ; that as the Eternal Godhead has given to the flesh of Christ Jesus (quhilk of its awin condition and nature wes mortal and corruptible), life and immortalitie ; so dois Christ Jesus, His flesh and blude, eattin and drunken be us, give unto us the same prerogatives. Quhilk,

albeit we confess are neither given unto us at that time onelie, neither zit be the proper power and virtue of the sacraments onelie; zit we affirme that the faithfull, in the richt use of the Lord's Table, has conjunction with Christ Jesus, as the naturall man cannot apprehend: Zea, and farther we affirme, that albeit the faithful, oppressed be negligence and manlie infirmitie, dois not profit someikle as they wold, in the verie instant action of the Supper: zit sall it after bring frute furth, as livelie seid sawin in gude ground. For the Holy Spirite, quhilk can never be divided fra the richt institution of the Lord Jesus, wil not frustrate the faithfull of the fruit of that mystical action: Bot all thir, we say, cummis of trew faith, quhilk apprehendis Christ Jesus, who only makis this Sacrament effectuell unto us. And therefore, whosoever sclanders us as that we affirme or beleve Sacraments to be naked and bair signes, do injurie unto us, and speaks against the manifest trueth. Bot this liberallie and franklie we confess, that we make ane distinctioun betwixt Christ Jesus in His eternall substance, and betwixt the Elements of the Sacramentall signes. So that we will neither worship the signes, in place of that quhilk is signified by them, neither zit doe we despise, and interpret them as unprofitable and vaine, bot do use them with all reverence, examining ourselves diligentlie before that so we do, because we are assured be the mouth of the Apostle, that sik as eat of that bread, and drink of that coup unworthelie, are guiltie of the bodie and blude of Christ Jesus.”¹

¹ In a curious catechism, written in Latin by Principal Adamson, who was present at the Glasgow Assembly of 1638, and whose views may be taken as illustrative of the opinions held by his contemporaries, there are the following strong statements respecting the sacrament:—

“DE CÆNA DOMINI.

Q. Quid est cœna Domini? *R.* Est Sacramentum, quo spiritualiter in Christo nutrior et adolesco.

Q. Quomodo confirmat cœna Domini fidem tuam in promissionem

Perhaps no better exposition of the Reformed doctrine, or illustration of the teaching given in the Church of Scotland regarding the Eucharist at the time of the Reformation, can be found than the volume of sermons upon the sacraments by Mr Robert Bruce,—who was minister

fœderis? *R.* Dum per eam persuasum sit mihi, quod quemadmodum corpus meum cibo et potu, ita anima mea Jesu Christo vescitur et augescit.

Q. Quæ sunt externa signa in cœnæ sacramento? *R.* Signa sunt, primum, elementa ipsa, panis et vinum; deinde ritus et actiones sacramentales, fractio, fusio, datio, acceptio, esio, et potio.

Q. Quid repræsentatur et obsignatur nobis per elementa et actiones istas. *R.* Jesus Christus, ejus crux seu passio, et beneficia necnon nostra cum ipso, ejus cruce, et beneficiis communio.

Q. Quid ergo sunt panis et vinum in cœnæ sacramento? *R.* Sunt corpus et sanguis Domini.

Q. Mutantur ne panis et vinum in corpus et sanguinem Domini? *R.* Nequaquam; sed res sacramentorum terrenæ et palpabiles usum mutant, non substantiam.

Q. Suntne tamen vere Christi corpus et sanguis? *R.* Ita credo, quia Christus, qui est ipsa veritas, ita dixit.

Q. Persuasum tibi esse video panem et vinum in sacra syntaxi esse corpus et sanguinem Domini, sed nunquid etiam tam certo perspectum habes modum et rationem qua talia fiunt? *R.* Sane hoc mysterium est, in quo non decet sapere ultra illud quod scriptum est, sed quantum ex Dei verbo discere potuerim, ita dici credo, quia per ea Domini corpus et sanguis non tantum repræsentantur, sed et offeruntur, et credentibus vere exhibentur.

Q. Hinc constare videtur, quod manducemus corpus et bibamus sanguinem Christi; non tantum spiritaliter, firmiter credendo, quod pro nobis corpus ejus fractum sit, et sanguis effusus, sed et sacramentaliter seu mystice, in cœna corpus ejus et sanguinem participando. *R.* Clarissime: nam mensa Domini est communio corporis et sanguinis Christi: quam participantes corpus ejus manducamus, et sanguinem bibimus, mystice et sacramentaliter, ut unus cum eo fiamus spiritus, et unum corpus, ex carne ejus, et ex ossibus ejus; nam spiritualis hæc communio illius sacramentalis finis est."

in Edinburgh, 1588-1603,—and which were printed in 1617:—

“I call them [the bread and wine] not signnes because they represent only, but I call them signnes because they have the bodie and blood of Christ joyned with them. Yet sa truly is the bodie of Christ joyned with that breade, and the blood of Christ joyned with that wine, that als soone as thou receaves that bread in thy mouth (giv thou be a faithful man or woman), als soone thou receavest the bodie of Christ in thy saull, and that be faith. And als soone as thou receaves that wine in thy mouth, als soone thou receaves the blood of Christ in thy saull, and that be faith. In respect of this exhibitoun cheiflie that they are instruments to deliver and exhibit the thing that they signifie, and not in respect onely of their representatioun, they are called signes.”¹

“As there is tua sortes of actions, sa there is tua sortes of instrumentes quhereunto the signe and the thing signified are offered; for the thing signified, that is Christ, is never offered to the mouth of my bodie. The blood of Christ, the flesh of Christ, haill Christ, or the Spirit of Christ, is not offered nather in the Word nor in the sacrament, to the mouth of my bodie. . . . As the signe is corporall, and onely offered to a corporall instrument, so is it receaved in a corporal and naturall manner; for thou maun tak the bread and the wine ather be thy hand or be thy mouth. The thing signified is not taen after a corporall maner, bot after a secret and spiritual maner; and as it is offered so it is taen; there cannot be a thing clearer; the ane is taen after a naturall maner, the other after a secret and spiritual maner.”²

The unbroken character of the testimony which is borne by these and similar authorities plainly

¹ Bruce's Sermons, p. 10.

² Ibid., p. 16. For a curious similarity of treatment see Gore's 'Body of Christ,' pp. 65, 143.

shows that Scottish Presbyterianism, up to the period of the Westminster Assembly, was decidedly identical with the Reformed Churches in its doctrine of the sacraments. It is true that there is not much to be gathered from the writings of Gillespie or Henderson to throw light upon their personal belief. Their attention was so completely absorbed with the question of Church polity that their silence regarding sacramental doctrine indicates, if anything, that they had accepted without difficulty the views of the old Confession and of the Catechisms which were in common use.

The history of opinion in England is in some respects less distinct and more varied than that of Scotland. The sacraments formed a continual subject of controversy between the Reformers, who desired to purify the Church from every shred of Romanism, and those whose hearts still clung to the old ceremonies and doctrine of the mass. But as the only question with which we have at present to do has respect to the belief of the Reformers, especially those who were afterwards represented at the Westminster Assembly, it is unnecessary to do more than indicate the nature of the teaching they generally received.

The history of the formation of the Articles of the Church of England, and of the changes which took place in her Liturgy and Rubrics, clearly demonstrates that the reforming party held Calvin's views of the Supper.

The Articles, originally the work of Cranmer

and Ridley, underwent several changes; but from the time when first promulgated under Edward in 1552, until they assumed their final shape during the reign of Elizabeth, they invariably expressed a belief in a real but spiritual partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ. The language of the 28th Article clearly expresses the Calvinistic doctrine:—

“The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ’s death; insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

“Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of bread and wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

“The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

“The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not by Christ’s ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.”

In like manner the Liturgy and Rubrics uniformly state that the eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of Christ is spiritual and by faith; and the language of the Homilies, and the authority of Cranmer, Ridley, Jewel, Parker, Hooker, Hammond, Jeremy Taylor, Cosin, Bramhall, Patrick, Bull,

Wake, and Waterland, are distinctly on the side of Calvin.¹

As respects the state of opinion among the Protestants who were outside of the Church of England, it may be asserted that, with the exception of such sectaries as were imbued with Socinian and Anabaptist error, the great bulk of the Nonconformists were Calvinists, and held Calvin's doctrine of the sacraments.

The Puritans freely used the language of the Liturgy, and accepted the Rubrics of the Church, until Laud introduced into his Service-Book changes which indicated an attempt to conciliate the Papists. Yet Laud frequently writes as if he held the doctrine of Calvin.²

That there was no doctrinal difference between the Puritan section of the Nonconformists, which was represented at the Westminster Assembly, and the Moderate Church party, may be gathered from the significant fact³ that the Confession of Faith was based on the Irish Articles, which were the work of one who was not only the most learned prelate of his age, but a keen Royalist. Except for his political views, Archbishop Ussher would probably have taken part in the Westminster deliberations, and the Westminster Divines seem to have had no hesitation in adopting the Irish Articles, of

¹ See Harold Brown, *passim*.

² See the Seventh Part of the series of articles on the Holy Eucharist which appears in the April 'Church Quarterly,' 1903.

³ Professor Mitchell has made this very clear in his 'Lecture on the Confession of Faith.'

which he was the author, as the model and basis for their doctrinal declarations. The views of Ussher respecting the sacraments were decidedly Calvinistic; and the Westminster Confession not only expressed a similar belief, but did so almost in the very words employed by the archbishop.

After this brief historical inquiry respecting the nature and history of the Reformed doctrine of the sacraments, it only remains for us to give the words of the Confession and of the Catechisms to show how completely their language harmonises with that of the Confessions we have quoted, and with the views of the great theologian of Geneva. It will be noticed that, while the doctrines of Transubstantiation and of Consubstantiation are alike condemned, the real and true spiritual "feeding upon the body and blood of Christ," and the communion and membership of believers in the mystical body of Christ, are clearly and emphatically stated.

The Westminster Confession of Faith says:—

"1. Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His Church unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body. . . .

"5. The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation

to Him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before. . . .

“ 7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death : the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine ; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.”¹

The following are the statements of the Larger Catechism on the same subject :—

“ The Lord’s Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, His death is showed forth ; and they that worthily communicate feed upon His body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace ; have their union and communion with Him confirmed ; testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.

“ Christ hath appointed the ministers of His Word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer ; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants : who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and His blood shed, for them.

¹ Confession of Faith, chap. xxix. sects. 1, 5, 7.

“As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to the outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal or carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His death.”

The Shorter Catechism, while more concise in its statements, distinctly asserts the spiritual reception of Christ as well as the benefits of the new covenant sealed in His blood. Thus, in the definition of a sacrament, it is stated that it is “an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.” And, in harmony with the statements of the Confession and of the Larger Catechism, the Lord’s Supper is described as a “sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ’s appointment, His death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.”

No one who has followed the line of proof which has just been given respecting the doctrine of the sacraments, as held by the Reformed Churches previous to the Westminster Assembly, and as

expressed in the Confession and Catechisms which that Assembly authorised, and who is at the same time acquainted with the character of the teaching and the state of opinion now prevalent in Presbyterian communities, can have any doubt that, whether for better or worse, a great practical departure has taken place in the ordinary sacramental teaching of the Church from that of the Reformers, or of the standards which are still held to be binding.

We now finish this review of the Doctrine and Validity of the Ministry and Sacraments of the National Church of Scotland. As we previously stated, we have not presumed to speak for other Presbyterian Churches, as we are unable to determine whether they all agree with the doctrine we hold, or inherit the historic position which we claim. But what has been said as to the Church of Scotland necessarily applies to all those branches which have sprung from the parent stem, and have kept by the faith embodied in her standards.

There may be those who, in view of the questions which have arisen in recent years affecting the very foundations of Christianity, may think it a waste of energy to discuss the comparatively trivial disputes which divide Episcopacy and Presbytery. "Who cares," they say, "for the competing claims of Bishop and Presbyter when the world is asking whether the Bible is true or whether Christ has risen from the dead?" So indeed it may seem, and no thought-

ful person can escape feeling the pressure of such questions. Yet, on the other hand, it may be replied that the strength of the assault on this outpost or that cannot lessen the perils and the evils which are caused by the divided counsels and the divided forces of which the present state of the Church gives such sad evidence. Christ prayed for all those that believe on Him "that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me." Few things would be more evidential of the truth of Christianity in its true essence, few things would be more powerful in reaching men on behalf of Christ, or give a brighter augury for the future, than a fuller practical manifestation of unity, the revelation of which is so much hindered by what appear to us the uncalled-for divisions and misunderstandings that now separate the different branches of the one great Church which He has redeemed with His most precious blood.

It was with the view to further this great end that these Lectures were written, and however imperfect the treatment of the subject may have been, it will not be altogether in vain if they tend to revive the sense of unity which should bind those who, at all events, accept the doctrine of the Reformed Church; if they should help to heal the breaches which schism and division have so sadly produced; and if they should also inspire among our own ministers and people a loftier sense of the historic past which we inherit, leading back to apostolic authority and to a Church order

that we believe is older than those developments which took earliest shape in the second century, and have grown into a system which is too frequently misrepresented as having been alone of divine origin, and authoritatively established "from the first."

And, with the evidence which has been adduced,—familiar though that evidence may be to many,—it may not be a vain hope that something has been at all events attempted which may tend to break down the mutual isolation which has too long characterised the relationship between the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches.¹ We hail with liveliest satisfaction the utterances of such distinguished ecclesiastics as Bishop Wordsworth² of Salisbury and Canon Henson in his manly

¹ There are many practical benefits which might flow from a healthier understanding. Much good might ensue from co-operation, at home and in the colonies, in guiding education and securing the adequate religious education of the people; and if the true position of our Presbyterian Church was more clearly understood, we might hope that what have appeared to us painful scandals in relation to Government churches in India and elsewhere would become impossible.

² Among the conclusions reached by Bishop Wordsworth ('Ministry of Grace,' p. 142) he makes the following suggestive statement: "In process of time, and more particularly in the course of the third century, this governing order"—that is, the presbyters acting normally, and in Rome and Alexandria, as a corporate body or college—"tended more and more to act in the matter of origination through its presidents, although the right of the latter to act normally and alone had never been regularly established, except at Rome. In this way the governing order in the West has been differentiated into two degrees, though a tradition has always been kept up that they had an essential unity of character, now defined as 'priesthood' or '*sacerdotium*.' Not only has this tradition never been condemned by the Church, but it is probably a growing belief; and it has much to recommend it as a practical basis for that reunion between Episcopalians and Presbyterians which is one of the most obviously necessary tasks of English-speaking Christians."

Christian appeal for "Godly Union and Concord." We rejoice in the desire for a closer understanding, not only expressed by many leading Anglican ecclesiastics, but which recently led the Episcopal Church in Scotland to approach the Presbyterian Churches in that land with proposals for conference and prayer in reference to union. Incorporation may be neither possible nor, in present circumstances, altogether desirable. We have each our historic past and our strong convictions, and, what is perhaps a still greater obstacle, we have our deeply rooted prejudices. But when we learn to respect each other as true branches of the one catholic Church, of which Jesus Christ is the great and only Head and Centre of life and unity, and when we recognise all that is included in holding the "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all," then may we, by God's grace, surely endeavour more than we have hitherto done to keep at least "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," and to await His good time when a closer union of all Christian Churches may be brought about. Which may the Lord hasten!

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